

RECOLLECTIONS  
OF  
DAVID SMITH

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

Illinois

OP 95

28586

Illinois pioneer born 1831

m.p., n.d. (Paw-Paw  
Ill., 1915?)

37,50



**RECOLLECTIONS**  
**OF**  
**DAVID SMITH**



929, 209773  
Sm54r

Ill. Hist.,  
Subv.

## CONTENTS.

### CHAPTER I.

	Page
FAMILY RECORD .....	9

### CHAPTER II.

#### FROM SCOTLAND TO AMERICA.

Childhood in Scotland—His father decides to come to America—Preparation—Voyage—New York to Chicago.... 10

### CHAPTER III.

#### MAKING A NEW HOME.

Six weeks' sojourn at Ottawa, Illinois—The new home—John dies—House burns—Other misfortunes ..... 17

### CHAPTER IV.

#### EARLY FARM WORK.

Brother Robert takes the lead—Uncle John buys sheep—Wolves—Breaking prairie and trying to raise poultry—Rail fences and sod fences—Brother Robert makes a sulky plow—Trade their ox team for horses—Pay \$1.25 an acre for land—Raise potatoes, wheat and corn—First farm implements..... 23

### CHAPTER V.

#### THE MOTHER DIES—EARLY SCHOOL DAYS—AGUE..... 31

### CHAPTER VI.

#### FARM IMPLEMENTS.

Prairie fires—Uncle John Colville—Home made plows and corn cultivators—Planting corn—Evolution of the corn planter—Uncle John's farm and farming—Loss from prairie fires—Uncle John an indifferent financier—he worked cheap—extended credit too liberally—loss by theft—generously sold for less than a rising market in war times justified—generous to a fault, and died poor..... 34

### CHAPTER VII.

#### ACCIDENTS AND DANGERS INCIDENT TO PIONEER LIFE.

David finishes his schooling in schoolhouse he helped to build—Alex dies in the army—Robert takes the lead in farm work—David builds an addition to the dwelling house. How Alex escaped injury by a rolling log—Runaways—Falling timber—Amusing accident befalls Uncle John—Adrift in a wagon while trying to cross the river at Milford—Lose the pole while poling a scow across above the dam on the



	Page
return trip—Careless shooting at a wolf hunt—Indian Chief Shabona—Searching strayed stock—Lightning strikes the Nettleton home and renders Nathan unconscious—Great shock to Mrs. Nettleton—Loss of live stock by lightning—Cradles, reapers, mowing machines and headers—various kinds of hay rakes.....	39
CHAPTER VIII.	
MORE ABOUT PRAIRIE FIRES AND BAD ROADS.	
Hopps accidentally burns his haystack—Uncle John's blind mare thinks she is in the tread mill when she strikes the plank road.....	55
CHAPTER IX.	
MARKETING THE PRODUCE IN CHICAGO—SAUGANASH TAVERN BURNS—ASSESSING WILLOW CREEK TOWNSHIP.	
Hauled potatoes by team to Chicago and peddled them out for thirty cents per bushel—Slough grass and water from the lake to Desplaines river—Worked on the fire engines and pumps when the Sauganash Tavern burned—Two cases wherein suspicion fell on innocent parties—Dirt roads at their worst . . . . .	59
CHAPTER X.	
DRAINAGE—HOG CHOLERA—DEHORNING THE CATTLE.	
Deep sloughs entrap live stock—Dehorning cattle a merciful act—Caution required in laying tile drains.....	68
CHAPTER XI.	
WILD GAME OF EARLY DAYS.	
Depredation by wolves—Many killed—Killing deer, five with one shot—Geese, ducks and cranes as well as prairie chickens, and quail, plentiful—Coons valuable—Otters also found here—Evidences that buffalo used to be here.....	77
CHAPTER XII.	
SOCIAL LIFE OF THE PIONEERS.	
Preaching seventy-five years ago—The first school—Picking up live snakes . . . . .	83
CHAPTER XIII.	
"YANKEE BILL"—THE OLD TIME PEDDLER—INLET SWAMP—A HUNT FOR GOOSE AND DUCK EGGS.....	
	89
CHAPTER XIV.	
FATHER AND MOTHER.	
A description from memory after the lapse of seventy-five years . . . . .	92



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	Page No.
The Old Inn at Machrihanish (The Salt Pans just below Upper Lassett—The Home of the Smiths).....	10
Upper Lassett, Home of the Smiths in 1836 (Birthplace of David Smith) .....	12
Upper Tierfergus, Home of the Smiths in 1822 (Birthplace of Robert Smith).....	14
Smith's Grove, Near David Smith's Residence.....	19
Martha (Smith) Hopps, the first bride in Lee County.....	25
Dwelling House of David Smith.....	26
Tenant House on David Smith's Farm (Home of Walter Barringer) .....	28
John Colville.....	36
Alexander Smith.....	40
Jane (Smith) Nettleton.....	42
Shabona .....	46
First Frame House Built at Smith's Grove—Built by Mr. Nettleton against a log house that was torn down before this picture was taken .....	49
Robert Smith (from a photo taken in 1856).....	60
Sauganash Tavern.....	62
David Smith at 70 Years of Age.....	65
David Smith at 50 Years of Age.....	70
David Smith Putting Oats in His Granary While Threshing 3,000 Bushels in One Day.....	73
David Smith.....	94



## Introduction

When I wrote the following pages of this little booklet, I did not expect to have them published; but when I allowed it to be published in the Dixon Weekly Citizen, so many liked it and wished me to get it published in booklet or pamphlet form that I have concluded to do so, and also to have the pictures of all my brothers and sisters, and also John Colville's and my own and a few other pictures put in the booklet. I think that it will then be a nice little present to give to many of my relatives and other friends. I intend to order a lot of them published and bound in a neat booklet to give to many of my relatives while the supply lasts, as I think that will be a nicer way of leaving something for my friends to remember me by than by putting up a tombstone for myself as some of such men asked me to do lately, as I am eighty-three years old.

DAVID SMITH.

Paw Paw, Ill., February 4, 1915.



## CHAPTER I.

### Family Record

Martha Smith was born 6th February and baptized 9th February, 1820, and died July, 1862.

Robert Smith was born 25th June, 1822, and baptized July 4, 1822, and died September 22, 1905.

David Smith was born 11th of January and baptized 16th of January, 1825, and died 26th of January, 1825.

Jean Smith was born 23d of June, and baptized 9th of July, 1826, and died January 3, 1830.

John and David Smith, born 6th of January and baptized the 8th, 1829. David died 16th of January, 1829. John died August, 1837.

David Smith born 16th of July, 1831, and baptized August 2, 1831. Now living on old homestead in Willow Creek, where he has lived continuously for over seventy years.

Jean or Jane born 21st of September; baptized October, 1833, and died June 5, 1894.

Alexander Smith born 20th of December, 1835; baptized 30th December, 1835, and died January 3, 1836.

Their mother died October 1, 1840, aged 43 years.

Alexander C. Smith, born at Ottawa, Ill.; baptized there July, 1837, and died at Pittsburg Landing, Tenn., April 26, 1862.

The foregoing accounts of births and deaths were copied from my father's Bible, on the 9th of February, A. D. 1913. Which Bible he had told me was printed in pamphlet form, a small part at a time and that he afterwards got it bound but that a little of it had been lost before getting it bound.

Their father born January 19, 1785, and died August 21, 1860. An uncle, John Colville, was born November 12, 1812, and died October 22, 1893. His wife died April 18, 1881, aged 61 years, 2 months, 17 days.

## CHAPTER II.

### From Scotland to America

As I have been asked to write some of my early recollections of Scotland and trip to this country and early settlement in Illinois, I begin with my childhood in Scotland.

I remember seeing some of my father's hired men hauling seaweed to fertilize the land with. I think that they used only one horse and cart to each man and I think that men walked and led the horses when coming back with loads. I was told that it



THE OLD INN AT MACHRIHANISH BAY (THE SALT PANS JUST BELOW UPPER LASSETT—THE HOME OF THE SMITHS).

was about five miles to the seashore where they got the seaweed to which point it had drifted out with the tides and I remember seeing some boys looking for large stalks of the seaweed that they liked to eat like a turnip. I think that it had a slight salt taste. We had no wagons or four-wheeled carriages on the farm in those days. I remember going to church with father and mother in a two wheeled carriage to Campbeltown and we gen-

erally visited some of our relatives while in that place. I remember that my oldest sister stayed in Campbeltown a while. I think she was learning dressmaking. Sometimes she walked home although it was five miles, or at least part way as I used to run to meet her when I saw her coming. Sometimes she brought me a toy or something to play with. And I remember she took me walking, I think among the hills where our sheep used to be pastured. On one occasion it thundered and I asked her what that noise was, as I had not remembered of hearing such noise before. I suppose it was not very common there and I was trying to imagine what was causing the noise. I imagined people rolling stones down rocky steep hills and when told that it was thunder I had no better idea of the cause and when told that God made it rain I wondered how He caused it to spread so nicely. Did He have the angels carry the water to the skies and pour it through sieves or colanders to spread it so nicely? And I remember, too, asking an older boy what God made the world out of, and he answered that God just spit and made the world out of that. Then I wondered if spit would grow like that: if my spit would grow if I gave it a good chance, so I tried it in a dish of milk that was left out. To show the different thought of children I will mention the idea of another boy when seeing the stars begin to shine. He remarked that Mrs. God was lighting the candles. I remember while in Scotland that all of my brothers and sisters and myself were sick with scarlet fever and that some of our cousins came from Campbeltown to see us and help take care of us and I saw the doctor bleed sister Martha and hold a dish to catch the blood. As her hair was coming out badly, father had shaved her head and I think that her hair grew coarser and heavier than it was before, and I remember that mother had a sore foot and that they got leeches and applied to the sore or bruises. And I used to admire the little spotted fish in a brook or glen near my birth place in Scotland. There were few trees close to the brook near the house and I think no fruits or ornamental trees except the hedge grew there. I think I never saw apples or fruit growing on trees in Scotland. As most of the farms were rented near our home I suppose that fruit trees were scarce but I was told that some did raise apples and that it was a great country to raise fine large gooseberries; but I think we



did not raise any except the blueberries and a few others that grew wild or native on the farm.

Father told years before leaving Scotland that he had been getting poorer each year for a number of years so he resolved to sell out and come to America, while he had a little to come with. Accordingly he sold out stock and things he did not want to bring here but he made the mistake of taking a very heavy iron plow with cast mold board that he thought would be good to plow new tough land with; but it was so heavy and run so hard that he soon sold it for old iron after taking it more than four thousand miles. But father's selling out did not stop his



UPPER ~~LASALLE~~ HOME OF THE SMITHS IN 1836 (BIRTHPLACE OF DAVID SMITH).

*Forfargoss*  
bad luck when he sold out in Scotland. It seemed to continue till he lost about all that he left Scotland with and he seemed to rejoice when the assessor assessed our property in this country as high as \$1,500, which he had to leave Scotland with. Before we left the farm the next renter moved into other buildings on that place and began stealing father's grain and feeding it to his stock before it was threshed so father got two men to watch to find out who was taking the grain and they caught the new renter, a Mr. Walker, stealing and father had him arrested; but it was an expensive job for father, as Walker got false witnesses to testify that they overheard father bribing his hired men to tell

that they caught Walker stealing; so father had to hire a lawyer to defend himself against the charge of bribing his men to testify against Walker and the lawyers found out that Walker's false witnesses were in another part of Scotland at that time, but I never heard what was done with the false witnesses. I did hear that Walker died in prison and that that farm was not worked that year, 1837. I remember seeing the officer taking Walker to prison and they walked at least as far as we could see them. He carried a big stick as pistols were not commonly carried there at that time at least. I think that they walked to Campbeltown, 5 miles. I remember of my folks drying boxes and barrels to pack bedding, clothing, etc., in, and how brother John and I were rolling each other in one of the barrels and while I was in the barrel he pushed it and got it going so fast down hill that I crawled out and tried to stop it but could not so it run over the bank into the brook or glen and broke in pieces on stones in the glen. And I remember going with brother John to Drumlemon a very small village or place, to get a man to watch the clothing that they intended to leave out all night to get thoroughly dried before packing them to ship to this country. Well do I remember while in Campbeltown before starting, that an uncle there, a brother of mother's, gave brother Robert a watch and John and me a pocket knife each. We had to go to Greennook I think in a small steamboat to sail on a sailing vessel that was to leave there for New York in a few days. I remember very well while walking on a plank going into the ship that John Colville dropped a boot that he had a number of things packed in and was carrying in his hand or arm and it sank and I saw men trying to get it with a hook on a long pole but uncle John never got it, and my folks forgot something that they had where they boarded while waiting for the ship to start, and they sent Robert back for it and the ship started and I was afraid that he could not get on the ship but some man brought him in a skiff. My father said that it was an American ship but I do not remember the name of the ship. I think it was Adriatic or something like that. They said it took us six weeks to get to New York and we lived mostly on oat meal and molasses. I think they only had one fire on the ship to cook for all the passengers and crew so that we could not cook anything long. I remember seeing a large fish come to the

top of the water with a kind of a snort. Some said that it was a porpoise and I think it would weigh several hundred pounds. At another time I saw the water fairly covered with small or medium sized fish but saw none caught on the trip. I remember seeing the sailors cleaning the ship before getting into New York and also seeing a pilot and a doctor come on the ship and when taking our goods off, father had them piled high on a dray and got on top to hold the boxes from falling. But the driver cracked the whip and started so suddenly that it jerked father off and bruised his hip so badly that we had to stay in New York ten



UPPER ~~THE~~ ~~SMITHS~~ HOME OF THE SMITHS IN 1822 (BIRTHPLACE  
*Lassett* OF ROBERT SMITH).

days to have him doctored till he was well enough to travel again, and I remember meeting one of the sailors that was on the ship that brought us over and he recognized me and spoke to me. I suppose he was a little surprised to know that we had to stay in New York so long. And I remember going to church with sister Martha one Sunday while in New York. Next I think that we went to Albany by steamboat and from there to Buffalo in a small canal boat. I remember that I came near falling into the canal while stopping, I think, to come through a lock. I saw an egg up in the water and reached to get it but got so far out that I had to put my hands on another boat that was within reach but too far so that I could not push myself back into our boat, but some

one saw me and pulled me back. And I remember that brother Robert said that he lost the watch that uncle gave him as it slipped out of his pocket into the canal.

Father said that when he left Scotland he intended to move to Michigan but hearing of the Illinois prairies he thought it would be much easier making a farm in Illinois so he took passage on, I think, a steamboat from Buffalo to Chicago, but I do not remember how long we were on any of our trips from New York but it was slow compared with railroad time now. I had never seen a railroad till they built a short one about ten miles across the flats west of Chicago, ten or twelve years later. But we did get in sight of some cars moving near New York when we were starting for Albany. I remember asking mother what the cars were. The railroad across the flats west of Chicago was first made with flat bars of iron spiked on timber that lay parallel with the road but the weight of the locomotives kept pulling the spikes loose at the ends of the bars and bending the bars up at the end so they soon replaced them with other rails and extended the railroads west, both the C., B. & Q. and the C. & N W., or I think it was first called the Chicago and Fulton. I think that the C., B. & Q. first used what was called double T rails that were like two half rails laid side by side so that the end of one half would meet another about the middle of the other half which made a nice smooth track but did not have the strength or lasting qualities of the common T rail. But I must go back to our steamboat trip from Buffalo to Chicago. I remember being delayed a while by the boat running on a sandbar so that they had to take part of the load out to a near point of land and then rock the boat by having us run back and forth from one side of the boat to the other. I remember running with the others although only six years old then but I remember also that the mosquitoes were the worst I had ever seen. I saw a number of young men bathing in the lake while waiting in their efforts to get away from the mosquitoes. As I could not swim I had to stay in the boat and fight the mosquitoes till I got tired or nearly exhausted and began to cry when my mother had me lie down and put something over me till I could rest. I remember, too, when we landed in Chicago that father gave us a dinner at which I saw the first cucumber pickles and wondered what they were. As they were split length-

wise I thought the seeds looked a little like fish bones. I was fond of fish but did not like that kind. Then father hired two men with teams and wagons to move us and our goods to Ottawa. I think that father knew the Armour's that were in Ottawa at that time as they were from Campbeltown. One of them, George Armour, I think, bought grain both in Ottawa and Chicago after the canal was finished between those places and I remember meeting George Armour in Chicago more than twenty-five years after we first came to Ottawa. He had two brothers in Ottawa when we first came there but I think that neither of them ventured into as large business as George did.

## CHAPTER III.

### Making a New Home

When we arrived in Ottawa it must have been about the last of June or first of July as father wrote that brother Alexander was born there in July and that brother John died here in August but did not write the day of either month and he said that we were in Ottawa about six weeks, while he was buying the claim to this grove and getting a log house built on this farm. He had rented a log house in Ottawa ; it stood on the east bank of Fox river very near where it runs into the Illinois river and it had a rail fence around it or at least part way around the house where our family stayed till they had the house nearly finished that they were building about two rods east of my present dwelling house. I think Uncle John was with father at least part of the time while building the house as he was handy with carpenter tools and he always lived with us after we left Scotland till my mother died. But father had two men from Pawpaw building it when we all moved here and father brought some lumber from Ottawa for floors and stood part of it against the end of the log house to sleep under till we could get into the house. Sister Martha was sick while living there and one day a rattlesnake crawled along the log under the head of her bed and I saw her get out of bed ; father killed the snake. But perhaps I should write a little more about our stay in Ottawa for I remember seeing brother Robert swim into Fox river and catch wood that was floating and bring it to the bank near the house that we lived in and chop and split it for fuel. Brother John and I were bathing in one of the rivers about every day while in Ottawa but as I could not swim then I did not intend to go into deep water, however, I did once step into water over my head. Uncle John took me in a very small boat or canoe quite a distance up the Illinois river. We sometimes crossed Fox river in small boats to go to the main part of the town where the stores or groceries were.



Once I remember going to church or preaching in Ottawa. Whether the building was built for a church or other purpose, I can't say. While over there, I remember seeing a fight or at least seeing one man with a sore head carried into a drug store. I saw one person carry a lot of barrel staves which I learned afterwards were to have been used as weapons. But the fight ended prematurely. The fighters were working on the canal. A quarrel ensued and but one man got badly used. It seems one crowd got hold of whisky, then the whisky got hold of that crowd and they were whipped.

But to come back to this farm. I think that father had bought two oxen and two cows with their calves; also a bull and a mare and a light wagon. Uncle John and brother Robert made a wagon or trucks entirely of wood to use with the oxen to haul hay and wood; but they hauled or snaked the wood mostly on the ground so to have the small branches for kindling or light; but father had bought candles and oil too I think for light and also flour and sugar for winter use. We had been here only about two weeks when brother John was taken very sick and Robert rode to Ottawa for a doctor as we knew of none nearer, but the doctor only came once as John died soon. I think that the doctor called it bilious fever that both he and Martha had. We heard some time after, that the doctor drowned by trying to cross the river in a ferry boat on which were a number of cattle. The cattle ran to one side of the boat and tipped it over. I remember hearing father tell Robert to find out if that doctor left a widow or a mother that might need the pay for the doctor's service here. But Robert found out that the doctor was a single man from the East and the people in Ottawa did not know whether he had a mother living or not so we never found out what his bill was or anyone to pay it to. As about all the timber had been claimed even before the people settled on it, father bought the claim to this grove for \$150, although he said that the parties at Allen's grove offered to give half of their claim to that grove. But as he wished to get enough timber for uncle John and his children, all in the same place, he preferred to buy this grove, now known as Smith's grove in the town of Willow Creek in Lee county, Illinois. As our cows ran at large or loose, when the prairie fire came in the fall of 1837, they, with their calves and bull run off



or were stolen and we never found them again, although father hunted far and near for them till his mare got sick. Then she died, I think of lung fever. We had no stable built then, so we had to tie her by our haystack. Fortunately Robert and uncle John were using the oxen when the fire came and they did not get away with the cows.



SMITH'S GROVE, NEAR DAVID SMITH'S RESIDENCE.

Misfortunes came rapidly as you may see. But we soon had a much greater misfortune; our house burned with most of our newest clothing and bedding and money and winter provisions. As the snow came through our roof father thatched the house with long hay and fastened it on with hay ropes as was often done in Scotland. That roof got on fire one morning in Decem-

ber, 1837, and father got on the roof to get the hay off but did not have his knife or anything to cut the hay ropes with and they were so hard to break that it took him so long that by the time he got the hay off one side of the roof the other was all on fire and Robert went in the loft to try to get the boxes that had our best clothing and bedding in, down; but it was so hot under the low roof that his hair took fire and he had to come down and leave everything there to burn. When father gave up trying to save the house, he tried to save his trunk or chest that he had his money and best clothing in, but as we had a bed well filled with hay on each side of the only door and it was burning fiercely, he could not get in that way so he tore out the only window and went in that way and lifted the trunk or chest to the window but did not get it through as he thought it was too large for the small window. There were a lot of candles hanging above the window that were melting and when the hot grease ran into his face so that he could not see well or he thought perhaps he might have got the trunk out, and mother was outside urging him to come out lest he be suffocated and burned to death; so he threw a lot of his books out and left his trunk. I remember that I was in bed when mother told me that the house was on fire and to take my clothes out and dress where she had spread some bedding but I forgot my shoes and they were burned and I went barefooted that winter, but sometimes mother let me slip her shoes on, but oftener I went without any and often played even on the ice without shoes or anything on my feet. The family that lived at Allen's grove then had three log houses or rooms all joined together and they let us move into one of them. They also helped us to build another log house on our farm and they also made ointment or salve of bittersweet root or bark and lard for father to use on his face that was burned with the melted candle. That family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Gunsaulus and two daughters. I think that the youngest was near my age, 6, the other about 8. There also was a man living with them they called "Goose." I understood that they came from Canada but I think that they had not been here long as they said that McDowell had lived there. But McDowell was living at the east end of PawPaw Grove near the Harris family's, as he had married one of the Harris girls and I think that they found it lonesome living at Allen's Grove, conse-

quently they moved back near her folks. Mr. Harris's father was or had been a preacher and he officiated at my brother John's funeral in August, 1837. I heard afterwards that he had married himself to a girl of about 16 when he was about 80, performing the marriage ceremony himself; but as her parents did not consider the marriage legal and she was not of age they would not let her live with him. I suppose that old Mr. Harris must have been in his second childhood then, as my old schoolmaster, Mr. Robert Walker, told me that old Mr. Harris told him that the marriage was recorded in heaven and once when brother Robert was at Harris's and the old man's son was starting to Ottawa, the old man told his son to enquire about his wife.

It was one Sunday morning in December, 1837, that our house burned and I think that about all that was saved was carried out by mother and sister Martha as father, and I think uncle John, were trying to save the house till the beds got burning on each side of the door and Robert had been in the loft trying to get things out of there till too late. And I remember that I lost my Sunday clothes and both Sunday and work day shoes and father said that he had \$120 in his trunk or chest that burned with his best clothes.

He also had a watch and the works of a large clock and a single and a double barrel shot gun burned, besides our best bedding and clothing and provisions. I remember that we had neither timepiece or mirror in the house for quite a number of years thereafter as father wanted to save all that he could to pay the government for our land—\$1.25 per acre—when it came into market. We had no mirror when I first began to shave at 17 years of age so I used a new bright tin dish. Father and Robert shaved without anything of the kind and Robert said that he had never cut himself while shaving without a mirror but he cut himself while shaving with one. But to go back to the fire; we picked up what we had and loaded it on the sled and all went to the Gunsaulus house. They thought that we had come visiting as it was Sunday. They let us move right into one of their houses and I remember that a great part of their living was buckwheat. One of the men would grind it in a large coffee mill and the women baked the cakes; but of course sifted the buckwheat flour with a hand sieve. My folks lived mostly on corn cooked in dif-

ferent ways as our flour was burned and father said that he had to buy corn on credit at \$1 per bushel. We often had hulled corn for dinners that was hulled by soaking it in lye or ashes and water till the hull or skin would rub off easily and then rubbing and washing and soaking till they got it clean enough. When father bought some pork and a cow, we often had mush and milk for suppers and we used some of our burned or charred flour for a substitute for coffee. We tried acorns and other substitutes for coffee and father used to gather and dry redroot leaves for tea. I remember that Robert caught a rabbit in the loose deep snow, as we had no gun for a few years after our house burned. Mother made a pot pie of the rabbit and I thought it quite a treat. I remember too that we had a large cast iron dish I think 16 or 18 inches across and about 6 inches deep that mother used to bake bread in it, heating it by putting hot coals of fire both above and below it as it had a cast iron cover on it. We had an open fireplace in both the houses that burned and in the next that they built; but as the second often smoked badly we soon got uncle John to go to Chicago with our one horse wagon and buy a stove. I think that he drove his own horse as we had none since the one died in the fall of 1837 till Robert got one of Mr. Howlett in 1839 which he paid for by breaking prairie. A cousin of father's had sent father \$100, and told him to keep it till he was able to pay it. His name was Wm. Wilson and he and his sons kept store in Glasgow, Scotland. He sold boots and shoes and umbrellas till 1860 when father died; I have not heard from them since.

## CHAPTER IV.

### Early Farm Work

Father and Robert bought a few oxen and a breaking plow and Robert did considerable breaking prairie for ourselves and others and I used to go with them to help what I could till I was taken sick with the ague. Robert used to take the plow share or lathe to be sharpened about once a week to the nearest blacksmith that he knew of, about 6 miles south of where Earlville is now. He used to tie the plow share on between two wheels of a wagon like a cart and hitch a yoke of good traveling steers and ride there and back the same day. Robert was hardly 17 years old when he began breaking prairie but he had taken a man's place at about all kinds of work on the farm ever since we came here when he was only 15 years old. He was much handier with oxen than father or uncle John and he split and hauled nearly all the rails that we fenced our farm with, but uncle John used to work with him much of the time till mother died in 1840 when uncle went to Ottawa and I think, clerked or worked for one of the Armours there for two or three years. Then he came here again and changed work with Robert again till he got a little farm fenced and plowed or broken and a log house on it and as he received some money from Scotland that he was heir to, he went to Dixon to pay the government for his farm; but he found that it was surveyed and divided into so many pieces he would have to buy other land to get the whole of his farm and as he had not money enough to do so he did not buy any land then but bought sheep with his money and he rented the farm to a Mr. Hair and left the sheep for Mr. Hair to take care of. I think that many of the sheep were old and as they were fed little or no grain, and nothing but prairie hay, a number of them got poor and died in spring, so uncle John got tired of the sheep business and sold them to father but the snakes and wolves killed some of them. One night we had forgotten to take them from



the pasture to their yard during which there were nine of them killed by wolves or dogs and once when I was helping father haul hay I drove within about 20 feet of a wolf that was eating one of our sheep it had just killed. I rose to try to throw the fork into the wolf but it run off as soon as I began to rise up. At another time I showed Mr. Hair a wolf that was watching to slip up to the sheep and he got his rifle and got near enough so that he killed it and at another time John Nettleton came here and saw a wolf eating one of our sheep or lambs and he went to our house but found no person there. A rifle was found there ready loaded but as it was a double triggered gun he did not know how to use it so he did not try to shoot it. Another time before we got the sheep, Robert was hauling rails from the grove to the field and while passing the house he saw a wolf trying to catch some of our hens so he got the rifle and fired, but it ran off and he did not know whether he hit it or not but when I came from the field I heard our dog and another dog fighting something and I found it was a wolf and helped them kill it and when we skinned it we found a ball hole through the bowels. Robert caught two in a trap once but one of them chewed its foot off and left it in the trap. A neighbor killed one with only three feet on some time after that which must have been our wolf. But I will leave the wolf stories for the present and tell of our first gardening and farming in this country. In the spring after our house burned father hired some of David Town's family to break about nine acres of prairie for us as we only had two oxen and no good plow. That was all that we had under cultivation in 1838 and we used about an acre for garden. The rest we planted to seed corn but only raised about 80 bushels of corn.

Mrs. David Town gave mother some garden seeds and put a dollar in change in a little package of beans that she gave her to plant and mother bought a hen and a rooster with that money and that was the beginning of our poultry in this country. I tried to increase our flock after mother died but as hogs run at large then, a neighbor's old sow came and stayed around here till I thought that she had killed and eaten about 80 of the little chickens. Simultaneously the rats came and I found quite a number of little chickens killed and taken into a rat's hole in the stable. But we saw no rats here till near 1841. Sister Martha

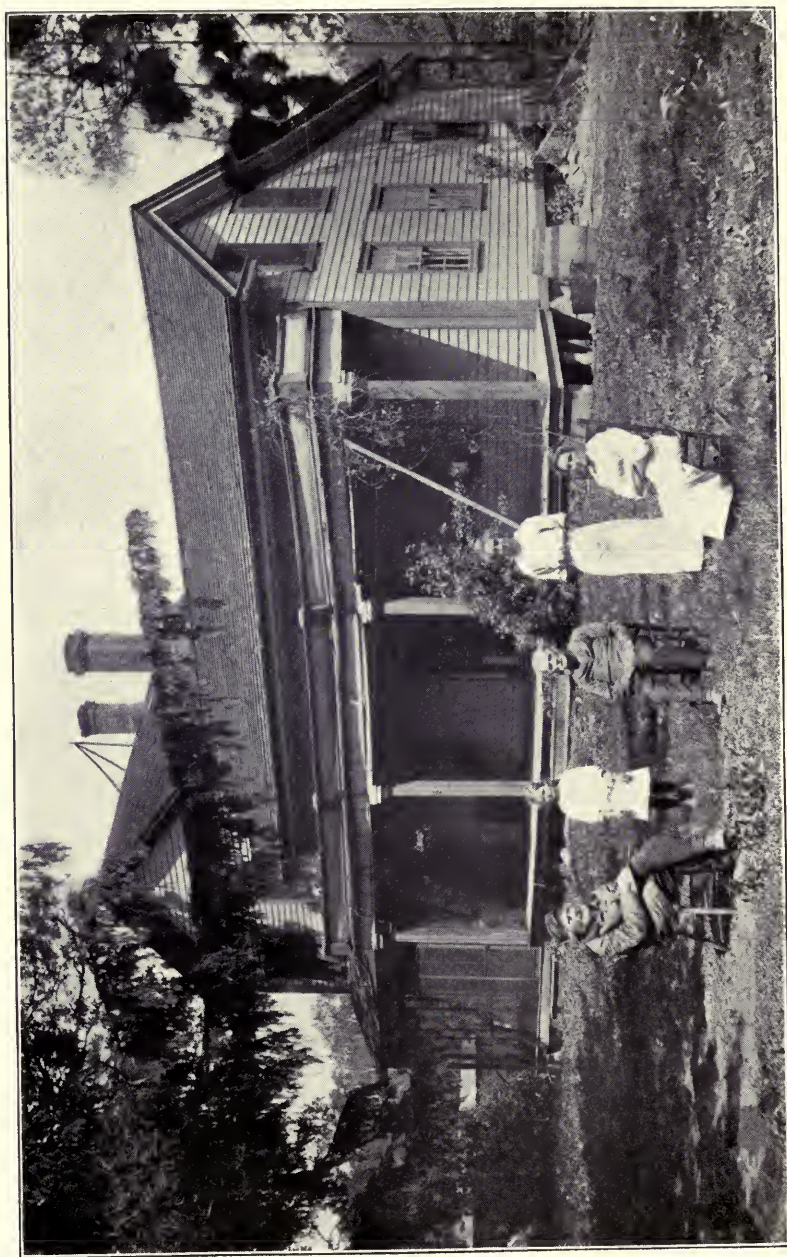
had worked some for David Town's folks. As they kept travelers they often needed help in the house. But wages for both men and women were very low at that time. She was at work for Christiance at Malugin's Grove in 1838 when she got acquainted with Wm. Hopps whom she married about that time. This was the first wedding in Lee county. I think it was in the spring or



MARTHA (SMITH) HOPPS, THE FIRST BRIDE IN LEE COUNTY.

summer of 1838 that the Gunsaulus family moved away and let Richard Allen have the claim to that place. I understood the Gunsaulus family moved to Wisconsin. Allen only stayed there about two years and let a Mr. Bond have the place. Mr. Bond stayed there a year or more and he let a Mr. Price have the place. Price only stayed about two years and Mr. I. Shoudy took the place and stayed there many years. After Shoudy's second wife died, Robert Wells bought the west part of that place and Butterfield, one of Shoudy's sons-in-law, had the other part a few years. Then he sold it to Mr. Frizwick and he sold it to a Mr. Bend. He or his son still hold the place.

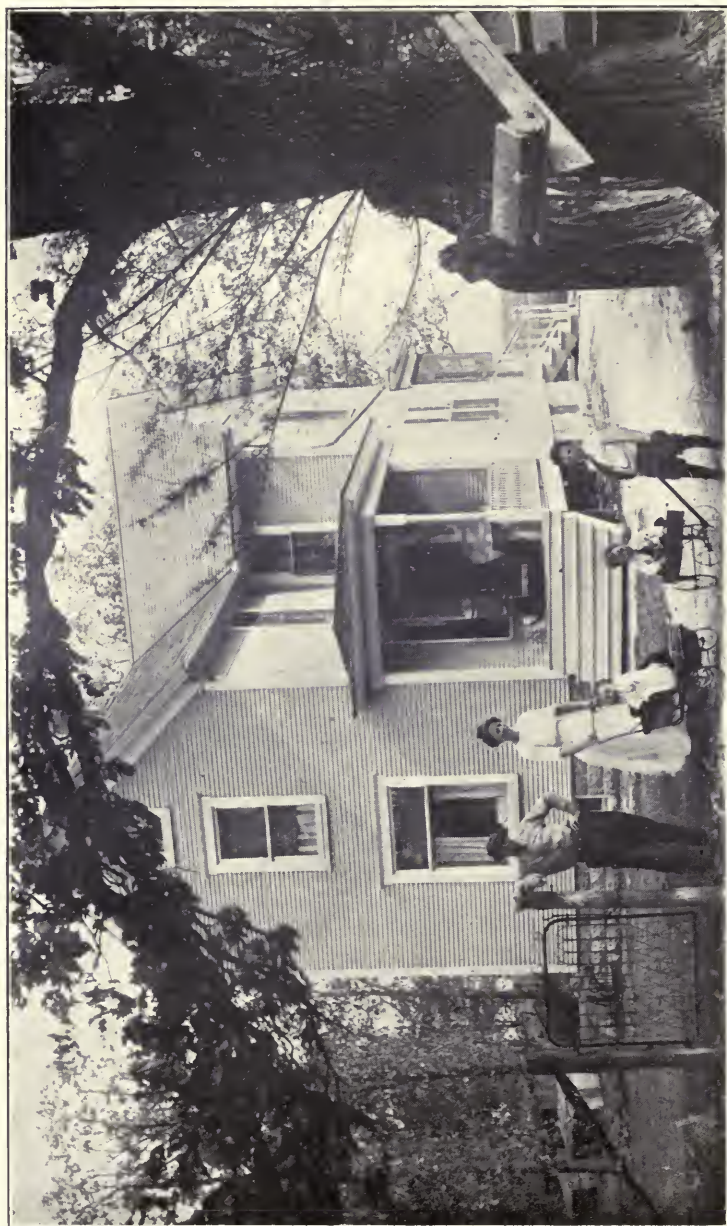




DWELLING HOUSE OF DAVID SMITH.

But I must tell more about our own farm which has not changed owners so often, as I still own and live on the same place that we moved on in August, 1837. As the timber in this grove was too hard to split long enough for rails father and Robert bought most of the trees or logs that Robert made rails of to fence our farm with. They got some from PawPaw and Allen's grove and some from Twin Grove. I think he hauled the most of them before splitting but I remember going with them for a wagon load of rails to PawPaw Grove. I think that they got them of Mr. Harris. I remember I had picked up a hat full of walnuts and was taking them home in my hat when one of the wagon wheels came off and let a lot of the rails roll off on Robert's feet and legs. I lifted them off so that he could get up. I was not hurt any but lost part of the nuts and got my hat bruised badly. Robert was all right when I got the rails off him but we were late getting home as we had to put the wheel on again as well as many of the rails. It was getting dark then and we had not gone far before the wheel again came off.

Father and uncle John made a lot of ditch and sod fence by digging a ditch about three feet deep and three feet wide at the top and about a foot or more at the bottom and building a wall of the top sods three feet high near the side of the ditch, always having the ditch on the outside and throwing all the loose dirt on the inside so that the cattle would have to get over the ditch then climb the wall before they could get into the field. But as the cattle all had horns they would get into the ditch and hook the bank till they could get over it and we had to put stakes and rails on it but they could not make a good fence of it. Father brought a little hedge seed from Scotland and had it planted on top of part of the sod fence. None of it grew, however, and father planted a lot of cherry sprouts or little trees that had come up around cherry trees that he had bought. These had kept coming up and spreading till there was a row of them five or six rods wide. Then I had them dug up and the ditch filled so that we cultivated the land. The trees never had much fruit on and mostly died, but sister Jane and I had planted some plum seed (or stones) on part of the sod fence and they grew and bore lots of plums for many years. But the trees have all died except those that have come up around the roots and they seldom have



TENANT HOUSE ON DAVID SMITH'S FARM (HOME OF WALTER BARRINGER).



had much, if any fruit on. As a matter of fact we very seldom have had any kind of plums to mature a good crop for many years back.

As I have written already Robert had started a breaking plow in 1839. He had attached axle and log wheels and lever to hold the plow out or in the ground, similar to the sulky plows of the present day; but sometimes large roots would throw the plow out unless some one would hold the handles or ride on the plow beam, so Robert had me go with him to keep the oxen pulling while he attended to the plow. He got along well alone except in tough places or where there were large roots and when I was taken sick with ague he had to work alone mostly. I was sick about a month that time and sister Jane told me afterwards that mother expected that I was going to die as brother John had died about two years before. Before I got well both Jane and our little two year old brother were taken sick with the ague but I think that neither of them were sick so long as I was. The next spring in 1840, father had me drive one yoke of oxen to plow the land that we had broken a year or two before, and we held the plow handle. Before we finished plowing, a man while moving to Wisconsin got stuck in some slough near here and he got Robert with our oxen to pull his wagon out of the slough and as he had a good team of mares, father traded four of our best oxen for them as he did not like to handle oxen nearly as well as he did horses and I was very glad that they made the trade as father could then plow without my driving and we raised a number of colts from those mares years after. Robert sold one of them and a mate to it that he had bought of J. D. Rogers for \$100 after both were grown up horses and he paid it to the government for 80 acres of his farm, but before that, father sold one of the colts for \$35 when it was about three years old and he also sold a few cows for \$7 per head and he paid the government \$50 for the 40 acre lot that our buildings were on, the same lot that all my buildings stand on now. We raised some wheat in 1840 but as father never got the hang of cutting grain with a cradle he hired Mr. McDowell and Mr. Harris to cut it. We raised a little buckwheat in 1839 but I think no other small grain, but some potatoes and corn in both that year and in 1838. Potatoes used to be good both in quality and quantity before we had potato rot or potato

bugs here. But father never had very good crops of corn as he only used a corn plow to cultivate it. Our first plows here had only wood moldboards and of course would not scour but if they had scoured they would not have been any better for cultivating corn with, as they would cut the corn roots just as badly and would cover the corn even worse. We used to mark the corn ground in rows both ways and plant by hand and cover with hoes but father sometimes marked both corn and potato ground out with a plow and then covered the seed with the same plow and we generally used only one horse while cultivating either corn or potatoes. Our first threshing machines here did not separate the grain from straw or chaff but just run the bundles through a cylinder and we shook the grain out of the straw with forks and then cleaned it with fanning mills. But many times we tramped oats out with horses and then cleaned them with fanning mills by hand but wheat was our main crop then as other grain would not often pay to haul to Chicago which was our principal market. Sometimes we could sell potatoes or oats at La Salle or Peru as they could ship them down the Illinois river before they had railroads there.

## CHAPTER V.

### The Mother Dies—School Days

In 1840, father and mother, Robert and uncle John were all taken sick with ague. Robert, however, kept up most of the time, and he and uncle John got some Peruvian bark and doctored them up without employing any doctor. Mother tried several kinds of herbs that neighbors recommended but she kept getting worse till she died that fall and I remember a few days before she died she had me sit on the bed and put a few stiches in some of my clothes that needed repairs and she told me that she thought that she was going to die and to be a good boy and Robert said that she put her little boy's hand in Robert's hand and told him to be good to our little brother for both she and father expected to die soon and after mother died father told Robert that he wished to be buried beside his wife if he died as he expected to then; but sister Martha and husband came over and he went to Ottawa and got some medicine, calomel and other kinds. As he had lived with a doctor he knew something about medicine and he physiced father so thoroughly that it broke up the ague and he began to get better and he said that he never had anything else that tasted so good to him as potatoes and salt did then. But he was very fond of milk. Unfortunately our only cow went dry before he fully recovered and he had to let Martha and husband take Jane and Alexander home with them and uncle John went away also and that left only father and Robert and myself on the place for about two years when father let me go to the Hopps place to go to school with sister Jane as there was no school here then. However, as Hopps needed me on the farm I went to school but very little that summer or fall and they had no winter school there that winter. The school in the spring was broken up with whooping cough and father and Robert came to the Hopps place and took Jane and Alexander and me home, and started us all to school at PawPaw although

it was two miles over the fields which we generally walked although Alexander was only six years old then. In winter Robert frequently took us to school in a sled. The three school houses that we attended at different times were made of logs and the benches of slabs. In the three first houses that I went to at Paw Paw Grove I generally sat in front of a window. One day while we were all out of the house at noon the window in front of where I sat was broken and a lot of bird shot stuck in the log cabin below the window but none of the pupils had heard the shot or knew how it happened or if they did they did not own it. Some one may have fired at a bird in that direction but I thought it strange that none of the pupils had heard the shot. Perhaps we were noisy playing at the time as we had a large swing on a tree a distance from the school and we all may have been around the swing at that time. I remember one day while coming from school when it rained very hard; that I had only shirt, pants and hat on when it felt like pouring ice water on us all. I suppose that Jane and Alex were as thinly dressed as myself. I remember another time that Alexander and I got caught in a hail storm with as little clothing on as we had coming from school. I had been cultivating corn with one horse and a little wooden toothed harrow and Alexander was pulling weeds. I think that he was 8 or 9 years old then and I about 14 or very close. We both got on the one horse and started for home. The wind took my hat off and I got off to get it. The hail began to pound the horse so hard that it threw Alex off and ran home. We got into the ditch where father and Uncle John had made the sod fence and as the wind was in the east and the ditch on the west side of the sod fence the hail did not hit us much, but the folks at the house were alarmed when the horse came home without us. Robert and Mr. N. C. Allen got a saddle and something else and started to find us holding the saddle and other articles above their heads. At last we started for home as it had nearly stopped hailing when we met Robert and Mr. Allen. We saw hail stones as large as hens' eggs but think that none so large had struck us. Many windows around were broken. As the corn was beaten down so badly that we could not cultivate it for some days, Robert took Mr. Allen and George and James Howlett and Alex and me on a fishing trip



to Milford, near Rockford. But we did not get many fish, as they said that it was too late for good fishing, although we hired a man with a seine to help us, but we had a lot of boys' fun and when we got back the corn had straightened up and grew faster than it had before the hail, so we could cultivate it again. Our tools for cultivating were very poor.

## CHAPTER VI.

### Farm Implements, Prairie Fire and Uncle John Colville

We had little or no money left to spare to buy better tools as we wished to pay the government for our land and there were no agricultural houses near, that sold such tools, so we got the home blacksmith to make steel shovels mostly out of old plow lathes or plow moldboards, as they had begun using plows in the early 40's with steel moldboards that would scour. I made a few wooden frames for the double shoveled cultivators and put on some of the homemade steel shovels and they worked well; but often those using them would let them run so deep and so close to the corn that many of the corn roots were broken so that sometimes the crop was nearly ruined. I made a cultivator with five shovels to work between the corn rows with one horse, but we did not like it as well as those that had only two shovels. It was much better, however, than the wooden toothed one that I had been using. We also got and used some one-horse drills to plant our corn with instead of hoes, but of course that was much slower work than the two-horse drills of later dates; but we soon quit planting corn with drills except on land that was not weedy, as we could only cultivate the corn one way and if we had a wet spring the weeds would get such a start that we could not kill them without much hoeing. We did not think that that paid well. Next we got two row corn planters to be used by a man dropping the corn but if we wished it planted in the rows both ways of course we had to mark out the land across the way that we run the planter and many could not drop it in good rows across. So dropping machines were abandoned and the wire check rowing machine of the present day was adopted; but of course there have been many changes and improvements made on them in late years. But I will go back and tell more of Uncle John's farms or farming. He nearly always rented out his

farms and worked at other work and after Mr. Hair had rented his first farm a year he gave up his claim to it to the Nettleton family and they were to put about as much improvement on the farm now known as the Pulver farm for Uncle John as he liked that farm better than his first farm. Accordingly the Nettletons broke up and fenced forty acres of it and Uncle John raised one crop of wheat on it and then rented it to N. C. Allen. Very soon, however, he sold it to Mr. Atkinson after he had paid the government for 120 acres; but he only got \$500 for that farm and I thought it so cheap that I asked father to buy it for me as I was not of age at that time and I liked that farm. But as father still owed the government for forty acres of his claim and Robert thought that we had enough land for the whole family they did not buy it or pay the government for the last forty acres of father's claim and the Illinois Central R. R. Co. got possession of it and raised the price on it to \$8 per acre instead of the government price of \$1.25, so father had to pay \$8 per acre for it while the Nettletons were fortunate enough to get forty acres joining it for \$1.25 per acre as the I. C. R. R. company only had every second section or what remained unsold on the even numbered sections.

Robert used to break or plow two or three furrows on each side of a strip of land twenty or thirty feet apart to burn between the furrows to keep the prairie fires out of the grove or fields but sometimes we did not get the strips burned off soon enough and others would let their prairie fires run and do great damage by burning hay or fences or other property of others. I heard that in Iowa they passed a law making it a state's prison offense to start a prairie fire and let it run. Many were very careless about that matter in this state. I think it was in the fall of 1845 that some of the Paw Paw people started a fire and let it run and it burned about 2,000 rails of ours because we did not have a strip burned but had furrows plowed to burn between. Robert was away breaking furrows for neighbors and we were waiting for a still day or favorable wind as we did not like to burn it with a strong wind lest the fire might get beyond our control and burn our own fences. The neighbors at Allen's Grove did not have their strips burned either and one of them, a Mr. Basford sent his girl to try to get us to help burn between their

furrows as she said that the prairie fire was coming from Paw Paw. Father said we would have to burn our own and took Alexander and me to burn between the furrows. He started Alex and me to burn the west part and he took the east part, but as the fire from Paw Paw had nearly reached us we had to work very fast to keep ahead of it. Alex. and I did save our side of the fence but the fire got the start of father and burned the most of the rails on the east side of the field. Before we had finished burning the west side, Uncle John came and got us



JOHN COLVILLE.

to help him burn the strip south of the field that he had just sold to the Nettleton family. They had not moved on the farm then.

But Alexander and I went back to help father after helping Uncle John burn past his farm and as the fire had gone past him and set many of the rails on fire he was taking the fence down and spreading the rails so that they would not touch each other as they would not burn much in that way. We worked till long after dark at that work and without having any dinner. I do not know whether our neighbors at Allen's Grove lost much then

but my folks thought that we lost about 2,000 rails in sloughs or where the grass was heavy the whole fence was burned but we saved the middle part of many rails that had one or both ends burned off where they lay across each other in the fence. We never got any pay for the rails that were burned, but I suppose we might have if the parties that let the fire go were responsible. Father never liked to sue any one, but he went to see some of the parties that lit the fire and asked if they were willing to do anything towards paying for the rails burned and some offered to let us have some logs to make rails of. But father thought the logs were hard to split so that they did not like to split them themselves, so we never went after the logs. The next spring we joined fences with neighbors and left about all the land between Paw Paw and Allen's and Smith's groves in one large field about three miles long and two miles wide but in a few years the most of the farms were fenced separately and a public road running north from the village of Paw Paw cut off about 1900 acres of the big field.

Uncle John used to make shingles with a machine to slice them off from blocks that had been boiled a long time to soften the wood. First he had two men with a long lever, but he afterwards attached a horse power to force the knife through the soft blocks of wood.

As I had written about Uncle John selling his farms for very low prices I will mention other reasons why he never succeeded financially. He would work or write or clerk very cheaply. He used to make deeds or applications for pensions and much other writing for very little pay and he clerked for Wm. Robinson in his store both in Paw Paw and Earlville for low wages and after he was married, he kept store for himself in Pawpaw and would sell on credit to many that were poor payers and wait on them for years and then take anything that he could use and allow them high prices for such property rather than try to collect money by law. As there was no bank in Paw Paw then he sometimes sent money to Chicago in letters to pay for store goods. He lost \$150 at one time in that way. He reported the loss to the government and they sent a detective to try to find out who was stealing the mail and the detective suspected the postmaster at Shabbona Grove as the mail was carried that way by stage at

that time. The detective got Uncle John to put some money that was marked in a letter and direct it to the same firm that he had sent the money to that was stolen. Then the detective rode with the man that carried the mail till he got near the postoffice. At this point he told the driver that he would hunt a little across the field while the mail was being changed and then ride with the mail carrier again when he overtook him. When he did so the detective opened the mail bag and found that the letter with the marked money had been taken out. So he went out and arrested the postmaster and found the marked money and the postmaster was sentenced to go to state's prison for twelve years. I heard that he died before serving his time there.

When Uncle John was keeping store during the Civil War some things that he had bought before the war rose very much in value, but he still sold them for the same low price that he began with on some things especially that he told me of. He had married a Mrs. Thompson, a widow with a son about the time he began keeping store a few years before the Civil War began, and he was deputy postmaster. While keeping store and when Lincoln was elected he was appointed postmaster and he held that office continuously until Cleveland was elected, and I think that he was township treasurer of schools about all that time, and afterwards, until he died. He let his stepson and others run the store before he died, October 22, 1893.

He once spoke of having handled much money for the people, but thought that none of it had stuck to his fingers. In some of his sales or donations perhaps some might consider him generous to a fault as he said he had hardly enough left to bury him decently.

## CHAPTER VII.

### Accidents and Dangers Incident to Pioneer Life

But to go back to the old farm: Father and Robert, Jane and Alexander and I lived on the farm and worked together, but of course the three youngest went to school considerably; but Robert never went to school in this country and I never went to any high school. I finished my schooling at Allen's Grove in a school house that I had helped to build when I was about eighteen years of age. I went to that school a little two or three winters after it was built but about all the rest of my schooling was in log houses that were built for dwelling houses. I never went to school much in the summer except one or two summers when I was about twelve or thirteen years old. The school house at Allen's Grove was the first school house built in this township. Jane and Alexander went to high school at South Paw Paw some and Alexander went to some high schools or academies at Naperville and Dixon. He taught school some before going into the army as he enlisted in the Fourth Cavalry in 1861 and he died of sickness on the 26th day of April, 1862, at Pittsburg Landing, Tenn. Jane's husband, N. A. Nettleton, went there and brought his remains here for burial. Nettleton was taken very sick with the same disease that Alexander died of (dysentery) soon after getting home, but he got well and lived two or three years and then enlisted and went into camp with other volunteers near Chicago. There he was taken sick with pneumonia and came home on furlough but he soon died. He had three brothers in the army. Two of them were in three years and are still living, the others lived many years after the war closed. But to go back to our log house that was built soon after our first one was burned. We lived in it about eighteen years before building a frame house, and all worked together, Robert being the foreman or head manager nearly all the time.



as father was not near as handy with many of the tools or kinds of work that we did in this country as Robert was. He sometimes said that he was too old to learn so he let Robert manage and take the lead as he was nine years older than I was. He kept breaking more of our prairie frequently to add to the cultivated part of the farm. When I was about seventeen years old I did the most of the work, building another log house or room joined to the old one, as I was quite handy with carpenter tools and I liked that kind of work. The others did the farm work



ALEXANDER SMITH.

while I worked at carpenter work or handling or hewing logs. I used to chop down and cut off large sawlogs and roll them on the sled with horses and take them to a sawmill that was run by horsepower near South Paw-Paw to have them sawed into timber to use in building a barn but for the outside lumber we hauled pine lumber from Chicago. Once while rolling a large log in that way, Alexander was with me, and when the log struck the sled it raised a little. The horses stopped because it was harder to pull. Alexander ran up with a pry to help the horses, but

just then the rope broke and let the log roll back. Alexander had to run out of the way very fast. I was afraid that the log might roll on him and perhaps kill him. So I never again wanted any person behind the log while rolling them on in that way, especially if the log was large. I badly hurt myself after that when I had borrowed a wagon to haul a log to a saw mill at Malugin's Grove. When coming back with the empty wagon the bolt that should hold the neckyoke from slipping back was loose and worked up and let the wagon tongue slip through the neckyoke so that the whiffletrees hit the horses and they began to run. I tried to turn up hill so that the wagon would not run on the horses, but the ground was so rough that the wagon tipped over and hurt my head so badly that I could not stand when I first tried to, so I staggered and fell again. I was driving the same high spirited team that had run over Robert and broke his collar bone and bruised him in many places when he had tried to hold them by the bits when the cars passed. I have known of men being killed and others badly hurt by having the tugs too long so that the wagon tongue came down and the team ran. People should be careful to make things as safe as possible when hitching up teams to wagons or anything, especially if the teams are high spirited. But I will mention other accidents. One that happened with Sister Jane's family when Wm. Hopps was going to help her to take a large calf to Robert's pasture. They tried to tie it behind a wagon with team hitched to the wagon and her three children and another boy in the wagon. When they tried to pull the calf up to the wagon it bawled and scared the team so that they ran away with the four children and one of the horses soon ran off the end of a little bridge and tipped the wagon box off and threw two of the children far enough so that the wagon box did not hit them but shut the other two under the box, which was bottom side up. Dan Nettleton ran to where they were and asked those that were not under the box where Charley (his brother's son) was. Charley heard him and called out, "I am here, Uncle Dan, but I'm dead." None of them were hurt much, however, which seems almost miraculous.

I had another accident that happened to myself that might have been fatal. I was hauling the bundles to be stacked but

only had a wagon box with boards around it for a rack. I had nothing in front to keep the bundles from sliding forward. While driving down a hill the front end of the load slipped out against the horses and they ran away and ran over me on top of the oat bundles. I feel sure the wagon wheels passed over my head and my hair showed the mark of the wheel but the skin was not broken. I suppose the oat bundles must have kept part of the weight of the load off my head. I got up and ran after the horses, but they ran to where Robert was stacking and



JANE (SMITH) NETTLETON.

he caught the team. We went to work again as usual, but think that we fixed something to keep the bundles from sliding forward. People always should have a ladder or something solid in front of the racks. We afterwards knew of a man being killed in that same way, but I was young and careless; only about sixteen, I think, and in a hurry to get the oats stacked. We only had one good rack. That was being used by another man. I had another accident or narrow escape afterwards. I had been fixing the hay carrier in my hay barn. I forgot to take

a board down that I had to sit or stand on while fixing the carrier about thirty feet high, and I got a long pole and while standing on a load of hay pushed the board so that it fell and I saw that it started to fall quite a distance from me, but the upper end of the board hit something that changed its course so that it came down swiftly and hit me on the shoulder with such force that I think if it had hit me on the head it might have been fatal. At another time I had chopped a large tree down that had a large branch or crotch. Nearly half of the tree struck another tree and split off and fell back over the stump where I was standing but I ran away far enough so that it did not reach me, but I had to run fast as it came down quickly and reached far past the stump. I have heard of people being killed while cutting trees among other trees. But I remember some incidents that are amusing when no harm was done. Once while Uncle John was helping Robert unyoke our oxen and steers to let them go to grass for the night, a yoke of steers that had a log chain attached to their yoke started quickly and the hook on the chain caught Uncle John by the heel and dragged him down, but Robert got them stopped before hurting Uncle John. They were having a big laugh about it and I went to the yard to see what they were laughing about. Another amusing accident happened while Brother Alexander and I were cutting oats with one of the old Ottawa reapers that we had fixed a platform on for the driver to stand on. I had a tool box in front of the driver's feet and while he was driving, something stopped the machine so quickly that it would have thrown him head foremost by the horses heels as the tool box tripped him, but he got his hands on the tool box and turned a nice hand-spring and struck on his feet standing behind his horses.

When I was about eighteen years old I went with Frank Ellsworth, Sam and Eri Butler and Henderson Hinkston on a fishing trip to Millford near Rockford, but it rained long before we got there so that we got all our clothes wet. We had to ford the river there and when we got in about the middle of the stream the team would not pull us further so Sam Butler and Ellsworth rode the horses across and left the rest of us in the wagon, but we saw a man with a boat and got him to take us across. Sam and Frank got a man with oxen and a long rope

that they tied to the wagon tongue and pulled the wagon across, but when the wagon struck the river bank the rope broke and the wagon started down the river as the water was deeper there than in the middle of the river. Eri Butler was compelled to go into the water. He got hold of a front wheel of the wagon and guided it so that the wagon tongue run ashore. There they hooked a log chain to it and pulled the wagon out. I had an extra suit of clothes but they got wet in the river. None of the others, however, had taken any extra clothing. We all had our clothes wet with rain and as there was no hotel or boarding house near we all had to sleep in a barn with our wet clothes on. While speaking with some of that party years after, they remarked that it was a wonder we had not all caught our death colds, but none of us got sick from that exposure. The next day we hired a man with a seine and we caught nearly a barrel of dressed fish. The next morning we started for home but did not try to ford the river as the water was deeper than when we came. Instead, we got an old scow that was large enough to take the two horses across on and then take the wagon at a second trip. The boat was above the dam and the water was deep and we had to push the boat with long poles. We had only two poles and while going one trip Hinkston was using a pole on the lower side of the boat and the boat floated against the pole so that it was either going to pull him off the boat or take the pole out of his hand but I got by him and helped him so that we could keep the pole for I think that if we had lost the pole the force of the water would have taken us all over the dam and likely have drowned some of us or perhaps all as I do not think that we could have run the boat across with only one pole. But we got home all right and I thought we earned the fish dearly enough by risking our lives. I never tried that kind of fishing trip again but perhaps I got into just as dangerous places at other times. Once, I think it was a year or two before that fishing trip, about all the young men and large boys near here went to a wolf hunt where there was some careless shooting done, but no fatal accidents. The Paw Paw folks were to form a line back of this grove and Allen's grove and march south while those living west of us within twelve or fifteen miles were to do the same, and those about Troy Grove were to march

north to meet at a little grove a few miles northwest of where Meriden now stands. All were expected to drive the wolves and deer towards that center and to meet about noon of the day agreed on, but before we got near the center nearly all the wolves and deer had broken through the circle or string of people. The rules were for only one man in ten to carry a gun or I think there would have been much more careless shooting. I only saw one deer and one or two wolves break through in sight of where I was, but I saw a deer killed that tried to get out of the ring. There were quite a number of shots fired at it or the one that broke out of the circle. I did not carry a gun but let N. C. Allen be the man to carry a gun for the people in this neighborhood. Many deer got through the south line and some thought they let them through on purpose so that they could hunt them in Troy Grove, but the Troy Grove folks said that it was because the Paw Paw people were about two hours behind the appointed time to meet at the center so that the folks on that side thought they were not coming from this side and many of them on the south side went home and left their ranks so thin that the deer got through that side easily. When we got near the center where we were to meet, there was only one wolf in the circle and many shots were fired at it. I saw old Chief Shabona on his pony and with a bow and arrows run near the wolf and put an arrow in it but I do not know whether the wolf had been hit by balls or arrow first. There were many shots fired at it. Robert said he could hear the ball pass above his head while he was behind the bank of the little creek. I saw Shabona showing the bloody arrow and thought he claimed that he shot the wolf and then I saw Mr. Morgan of Paw Paw talking with Shabona and heard Shabona ask Morgan if he had any whisky and Morgan pulled a little bottle out of his pocket. He took a drink and then handed it to Shabona and he drank what was left in the bottle. The rifles that we had then were all muzzle loading and as there were only a small part of the men and boys present that carried guns I think that fact saved some lives from careless shooting. There were very few if any settlers on the prairie except close by the timber at that time in this part of the country. I am not sure about the year, but I think that it was about 1846. I saw two or three other Indians there with rifles





SHABONA.



but was told that Shabona thought his eyes were not good enough to use a rifle. He seemed quite expert with his bow and arrows and horse for an old man. I had heard that before the Indian massacre at Indian Creek in 1832 that Shabona had ridden ninety miles in a day to warn the whites that the Indians were coming because he was friendly with the white people. That seems a long ride for a heavy man on a small horse. I suppose that the Indian ponies were all rather small, but father told me that he once had ridden ninety miles in a day when he had to go to Glasgow, Scotland, as a witness. He had to be there on such a day and had no other way to get there as quickly, and he was a heavy man. I would suppose father had a much larger horse than Shabona had. They had no railroad in that part of Scotland at that time, near Campbelltown, at least, but perhaps may have had some about Glasgow as it was the largest city in Scotland. I suppose, too, that steamboats were not very plenty there at that time. Peter Hunter, that married one of my Smith cousins, told me that he missed the boat he was to take on the day that he was to be married and the wedding party had met but as he could not get there till the next day and they had no telegraph or telephones then some of the wedding party began to think he had changed his mind and would not marry her and that caused them to say, "Just as I expected." But Hunter said he got there the next day and was married all right. As he was not a farmer in Scotland and had changed his occupation, I suppose some thought that he might change his mind about marrying a farmer's daughter.

But I will tell you more about old times in a new country. For years after we moved here all stock was allowed to run at large so that they might get the best grass they could find on land that was not occupied. It was often hard to find cows or horses or oxen when needed. And I remember that our hogs were away quite a number of days without being seen. They were allowed to run at large as we had little or no corn to feed in the summer till the new crop ripened. We often fed a little bran slop to try to keep them at home. Once we sowed a few acres of oats and peas mixed and fenced them and let the hogs in as soon as they were ripe. Then they soon harvested them and at the same time helped fatten them a little before the corn

got fit to feed them. Hogs, however, were hard to keep out of the crops. They would get over the rail fences or generally between the top rail and about six bottom rails, as our fences were generally built. I remember when about ten years old trying to drive one of our hogs out of the potato lot and the dog was trying to help me. When the hog tried to get over the fence the dog would pull it back till the hog got so angry that it turned to fight both the dog and me and it made a rush at me. I had a stick, however, in my hand and knocked it down or I might have been badly bitten. Soon after a law was passed forbidding hogs to run at large. And I remember Robert once took a long walk to try to find our horses and he told of the different groves that he had been at and counted; that he had walked fifty-four or fifty-five miles that day but did not find them. As all the early settlers lived near the groves he had to go from one grove to another to inquire if any stray horses had been seen. I do not remember where he found the horses that time, but at another time one of our mares was found at Shabbona Grove the next day after she left home. I think I never walked much if any more in one day than about half as far as Robert did that day, but I took some long rides.

Once I went in search of one of my mares and also one belonging to my sister Jane. I did not find either on the first day that I hunted for them. I did not find Jane's until I had sent for some newspapers in which the law required all stray animals taken up, to be advertised. In one of them I found such a mare advertised near Ottawa and Robert and Jane went there and got the mare.

Certain men used to make a business of hunting strays and charging the owners for finding them. I heard of one man that offered \$10 to find his horse. Another man found it so quickly that the owner suspected the other man who kept travelers or a tavern had hidden it. The owner of the horse had stopped over night with him and the horse either got out of the stable or was taken out. I heard of another man that used to make quite a little money helping people out of a slough near his house and was much displeased when some neighbors fixed the slough so that people could get through without getting stuck.

My Uncle John told of J. D. Rodgers riding his horse home

one dark night, when the horse went so close to the fence that his clothes caught on a fence stake and pulled Mr. Rodgers off and left him hanging there till some of his folks went and helped him down. The horse had gone home without him. Suspecting trouble, his folks followed the road back till they found him still



FIRST FRAME HOUSE BUILT AT SMITH'S GROVE—BUILT BY MR. NETTLETON AGAINST A LOG HOUSE THAT WAS TORN DOWN BEFORE THIS PICTURE WAS TAKEN.

hanging by his clothes on the fence stake. At another time while I was riding when it was very dark I rode against a fence stake that would have hit me in the face if I had not had my arm in front of my face. As the track is generally less muddy

close to a fence, horses often try to travel very close to the fence to avoid the mud farther out.

Once Alexander and I went to the Nettleton place intending to go swimming with their boys, but as it looked like rain we stopped a while visiting and when we saw the rain was very close we all started to go in the house. When I was within about ten feet of the house, it was struck by lightning; I was knocked down and the next I heard was Mrs. Nettleton clapping her hands and saying, "He's dead! he's dead!" I first thought she meant me, but when she kept saying those words after she met me at the door, I asked her who was dead and she said, "Nathan," and turned around and went back in the room where Nathan was.

The room was so filled with dust or ashes that had been raised from the fire place by the lightning, that at first we could not see very well. Mr. Nettleton was upstairs trying to find the hatchway through which to descend. Some of them asked me to open it and let their father down. I started to do so, but some of the family reached there first, and they thought I had opened the hatchway anyway.

Mr. Nettleton came down. I remembered hearing that putting water on people who had been struck by lightning would sometimes revive them. I told them to try it and they bathed his face and hands with water, at which he began to move a little. Then they got some one to go to South PawPaw for Doctor Hunt, the nearest doctor. I think that it was Sam Butler who went and when the doctor came I think he bled Nathan. I think his mother had got him to come in to try on a pair of pants that she had made for him. She had been lying on a bed and just as he was trying them on she saw the lightning strike him. It shocked her so that she was delirious for a short time. I remember she started off in the rain and her folks got William, her boy, and me to go and try and get her to come back, but she kept going till she came to the Ellsworth house and went in there. She did not know the folks there at first but kept talking as if they were strangers and saying what a fine day it was and what a fine home they had there on the prairie. Soon, however, she clasped her hands on her head and said to Mrs. Ellsworth, "Oh, I know you; you are Mrs. Ells-

worth," and she asked if she had heard that the Almighty God had come down and struck Nathan dead. When we went back to her home we examined the house and found that the lightning had split the floor a little above where Nathan had stood and there were three little holes or rips in his hat. I think the lightning had made them and had gone down his back. There was a rafter split, too, near the chimney, and it was thrown, the end of it, very near where old Mr. Nettleton's head lay while he was taking a nap after dinner.

While writing of damages by lightning I will mention a few losses of my own and others by lightning. At one time I had a fine mare killed and another very badly hurt while in the pasture. I think that one had been standing with her head above the other's shoulder and perhaps both were hit by the same flash as the flash seemed to run down the side of one's head and down the other's front legs. She had a little hole broken through the skin just above the shoulders. She must have been killed instantly. The other recovered, but always carried her head a little to one side. At another time I had a cow and two large calves killed as they lay close by a strawstack. At another time I had two fine young mares killed close by a cherry tree that was struck. This occurred the same night that Mr. Wright's and M. Ramer's houses were burned by lightning. I was fortunate to have insurance on them so that I got part pay for all those mentioned. The insurance companies, however, would not agree to pay more than \$100 on any one animal. But Robert was not so fortunate in getting pay for a large steer that was killed by lightning. The reason was they had written the insurance on cows while Robert expected that all of his cattle were insured. But perhaps I should have written about Nathan Nettleton's recovery before writing so much about the effects of lightning at other times.

I think that he was able to work again in a few weeks but a little weak and sore for some time. He used to change work with Robert and me and we three were cutting grain with cradles before we had reapers. One morning Robert told Nathan Nettleton that he and I might go and be cradling while he finished doing the chores, after which he would bring out a pail of cold water. We worked too fast for boys of our age. I



think I was only a little more than fifteen then and Nathan a year or two older. Anyway I drank so much cold water when Robert brought it that I soon got chilly and began to vomit. I went to the house, sick; soon I grew delirious and thought that I was cradling a race with a reaper that Mr. Shoudy had bought. It was the first that I had seen and I thought in my delirium that I was going as fast cradling as they did with the reaper and that I was cutting a wider swath than they did. It all seemed so real to me that I told Uncle John how I had run a race with a reaper and cut more grain than they did. I was only sick a few days that time. Nathan got sick the next day and Robert got sick the first day after I began work again but he had finished cutting our grain so that our next work was not quite as heavy work as cradling grain. We had quite a lot of oats to bind and shock yet and only father and I to do it, as Robert was sick about two weeks that time. I think that Nathan was sick a little longer than I was that time, so that he did not help any more that harvest. Sam Butler and Wm. Robinson of Earlville had bought a McCormick reaper that same year. They said they cut about 300 acres of grain with it. As we used to raise both winter and spring wheat, we had a long harvest, sometimes beginning cutting winter wheat about the first of July, then oats or some kind of spring wheat, that would not shell, as late as the middle of August. As they had but very few reapers in this part of the country they would run them fast and early and late. Next year Robert bought Mr. Robinson's share of that reaper so that he and Butler ran it afterwards and we did not cut so much with cradles after that but used them a little. Before the McCormick reaper was worn out, we bought an Ottawa combined reaper and mower and that was the first mowing machine I had ever seen. We cut a great lot of hay with it but always walked while mowing. Of course it was not near as good as they make now, but it was much easier than mowing with scythes. I used to get more tired mowing than cradling as I had to stoop more and we used to rake the hay with a home-made rake made of a log or pole with a lot of 2-inch teeth and handles that we had to lift over each windrow of hay. Next we got wooden rakes that would revolve over the windrows and they worked good on smooth land, but we had to mow the

most of our hay around sloughs or wet places that were very rough and hard to rake without letting the rake teeth run into the ground and break. Subsequently we got a spring tooth rake that we had to lift over each windrow but it was a poor one and the teeth were soon mostly broken. They used to sell spring tooth rakes. They used to sell also steel sulky rakes which were so very high that few would buy them. I think that they charged \$60.00 when first sold near here and I paid that price for the first two-horse corn planter that I bought. It had no check rower or drill attachment. A man had to ride on it to drop the corn but we used one horse corn drills, a few years that were much cheaper. I think that D. M. Nettleton paid \$60 for the first two-horse riding cultivator that he bought. He was too lame to walk cultivating after being wounded in the army. And binders and mowers were also high priced. I paid \$124 for the first McCormick mower that I got before they got in very common use. We used a header about twenty years. But we had to let the grain get so ripe and dry before harvesting that it would shell off badly or if we cut it when it was not dry it would mowburn or mold in the stack. Sometimes I would cut oats or flax with the header and let it run on the ground to dry before stacking and then pick it up with forks or a hayloader, but then it would shell off badly and perhaps waste enough to pay for harvesting it in some other way. Our wheat we always let run directly into header boxes and stacked it at once and I generally raised a kind of wheat that was called Black Sea wheat that never shelled off badly even if permitted to get very ripe. The headers we always run in front of the horses and the driver stood behind and guided the machine and drove the four or five horses.

Once while driving a bee got on one of the horse's feet and the horse kicked so high and hard that I think it might have killed me if I had not seen the horse's feet coming in time to dodge back so that his feet only reached me. I knew a man at Paw Paw that was killed while driving a hay press by being hit in the bowels by the end of the evener or whiffletree when something broke and let one end of the evener fly back. Sometimes the man that was driving in the header box would let his team go too fast for the header so that if the man or men that were loading got behind the header spout they might get pushed



or scraped out of the header box. Once Wm. Hopps was loading in the header box and was standing behind the header spout when his driver let his wagon get too far forward and pushed William out of the header box and left him hanging by one foot caught between the header spout and box but it did not hurt him badly but might easily have broken his leg. And at another time while I was cutting grain for my sister Jane her youngest boy was riding with the driver in the header box and while working on a side hill they run the upper wheel on a large stone that tipped the wagon over and threw the driver and boy quite a distance down hill and hurt the boy's arm so that he cried hard and I feared that his arm might be broken, but felt of it and found no bones broken. But years after that Wm. Hopps had his neck broken by falling off a load of hay. He had a hole in his head above one eye that I think must have been made by pulling the pitchfork off with him. I suppose that the pitchfork wound had been fatal even if his neck had not been broken. He had been standing on the load of hay when one of the wagon wheels struck a pole or fence post that tipped him and some hay off the wagon.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### More About Prairie Fire and Bad Roads

But I think that I will tell about some more prairie fires. The year that I lived at the Hopp's place, Hopps promised to furnish a tavern keeper at Wheeling, a lot of hay as there was plenty of wild or native grass on government land a mile or two south of his farm. That was in 1842. So he and a hired man mowed a lot and I went with them and helped put up a few stacks, I think about twenty tons, but he did not burn around the stacks or plow around them before some one might begin to start fires. When they began, he took his hired man and me to try to burn around the stacks without plowing any furrows or making other provisions to prevent fire and when burning on the windy side of the stacks, the fire run so fast that we could not whip it out and his own fire burned the stacks before the other fire got near us. He had raked the loose hay off the stubble on the windy side of the stacks, thinking that it might be easily whipped out where there was so little to burn; but it seemed to run faster where there was but little to burn and Hopps said we would have to let it go. He thought that there was no use to try to fight the fire any longer and we all stepped back from the fire. I felt that if we had fought it a little longer before stepping back that perhaps we might have saved the hay as it burned much slower when burning the scattered hay close by the stacks, but of course we would have needed to be close by and work fast to do any good as it was only a few seconds burning across the scattered hay. When it reached the stacks they blazed up instantly. Brother Robert tried burning around one of our hay stacks alone in the same way without furrows or anything to help stop the fire and he burned the stack. At another time father and I were husking corn when I saw a prairie fire coming toward some of our hay stacks. I knew that my only chance to

save the hay would be to put the fire out where a wagon track crossed the narrow slough between two pieces of plowing, so I ran there and met the fire just as it began to burn across the wagon track. I got it whipped out before it got a start but I think if I had been a minute later that I could not have whipped it out, as the wind was blowing directly up the slough towards the stacks. Dan Nettleton was only a small boy then and was watching his cattle in their corn stalks. He got cold and started a fire which got away from him. In trying to put it out he did not know where to work to do any good. I think about the fall of 1848 that we had another fire run through this grove. We had been trying to keep the fire out so that the young timber would grow as there were hardly any young trees in this grove when we came here. I suppose the fires had run through it for ages so that the young trees would get killed before they were large enough to stand a fire. We had furrows plowed to burn between but were waiting for a calm day so that we could handle the fire more safely. But one day it looked so smoky I thought there must be a fire west of us and I went to Nettleton's and told them that I thought we had better try to burn between the furrows. Mr. Nettleton and his boys went to the west end of the grove with me, intending to burn between the furrows, but as there was no fire in sight and a strong west wind was blowing they concluded they would not try it that day as they feared our own fire might get away from us and run through the grove. However, as it kept getting more smoky, I felt sure that the fire must be near and I went to the Nettleton's again; but by that time the fire had already got past our furrows and the Nettletons had to plow around their stacks and stables to keep the fire from them. I helped them to get a plow ready and they hitched their oxen to it to do the plowing. I came home but the fire got here as soon as I did and was burning close to our hog yard. Robert had sent N. C. Allen here to let them out as there were considerable in it. Their yard was not large and perhaps they might have got singed if Allen or I had not got there as soon as we did. Robert was plowing around some of Allen's stacks or stables at the time but they could not keep the fire out of the grove. However, he did not get enough plowed to save their hay. They did not have much as they had

very little stock at that time, but I think they lost all the hay they had put up.

I think that I will tell about some of my experiences on bad roads. Once Nathan Nettleton and I were taking two loads of potatoes to Peru to sell. When we got near where Mendota now stands we came to a bad slough where we found a neighbor's load of potatoes stuck in the mud. We hitched both teams to each of our wagons and finally got across all right. Then Mr. Voras got us to hitch our teams on his wagon as he said his team would not pull good again in the mud because they had tried it enough before. When we tried it one of Nettleton's horses got down in the mud where one of Voras' horses had floundered and he tramped it so it was very soft; so Nettleton took his team off and would not try it again. I then got the men to lift on the wheels and pulled the wagon across the slough with one team. Voras had a man with him and they were carrying some of the potatoes across the slough but it was very slow work because they had but one bag to carry the potatoes in. They had to pick them up with their hands and put them in the bag. So Nettleton and I started and left Mr. Voras and his man to pick up the potatoes they had carried across the slough. I think that we all got to Peru without much more trouble. We used to try to get bags enough to hold the whole of our loads so that if we got stuck we could unload part or all of it.

Once while going to Chicago with Uncle John with two loads of wheat one of the horses that he drove was blind, and had been used on his tread power so much cutting shingles that she was better at that than pulling loads in the mud. Well, we got stuck in the mud and we carried part of his load across the slough. He pulled the soles off his boots carrying bags of wheat across the muddy place and his feet were so tender that he could not carry any more. I do not remember whether I carried any more after he had to quit, but I think I carried a few bags of my own load across because I feared I would get stuck also. I had all the bags to put back in the wagons without his help and he had to go the rest of the way barefoot to Chicago before he could get shoes or boots. Whenever he would drive on a plank bridge, his blind mare seemed to think that she was on the tread horse-power and immediately she would begin to step up and

down without pulling forward. When at last we got within two or three miles of Chicago the road was sandy and the loads pulled so hard that Uncle John thought his blind mare was too tired to go further. He got me to leave about one-third of my load with him and go and sell the rest of my load and then come back to help him in with the rest of the wheat after his team had a good long rest. We did so and met the same man that I had sold the first load to and he thought that I still had the same load and said, "Aren't you the man that I bought a load of already?" and I told him I was and he asked me if that was the same load. I explained how it was and we sold him our loads and Uncle John bought some shoes and did some other business. Then we came home without any more mishaps that time. Another time he and I got caught in rain before getting near Chicago and we had to wear our wet clothes till they got dry.

## CHAPTER IX.

### Marketing the Produce in Chicago—Sua- ganash Tavern Burns—Assessing in William Creek Township

Father and Robert had hauled some loads of wheat to Chicago in 1843 and only got 40 cents per bushel for it. We heard of a man that lived near where Earlville now stands that raised a few hundred bushels of wheat before that date. He hired it threshed for 4 cents per bushel and then hired teams to take it to Chicago for 20 cents per bushel and all that he could get offered for it was 25 cents per bushel, so he let it go at that price as he had no chance to store it or pay for hauling there, till he sold it.

I never had to take less than 60 cents per bushel for wheat after I began to haul there for father or Robert as we all worked together till Robert married in 1856. But I took a load of potatoes to Chicago and could not get an offer for the load. I peddled them out a few bushels in a place for 30 cents per bushel.

Robert, however, had got as high as \$1.25 per bushel for a few bags of potatoes that he took there with a load of wheat. The grain houses there were all small and built close to the river at that time and once when I sold grain we had to pull the bags of wheat to the upper floor with a rope, a few bags at a time. The larger grain houses had one-horse tread-powers to elevate the wheat. We generally took about 2½ days to go to Chicago with loads.

We traded a little and stayed in the city over night. Then we came home in two days. Once while stopping there in the afternoon, I took a tramp around the city from lake to lake as I had a curiosity to see the size of the city. Of course it was small then compared with later years and I think that I found it quite sandy about all the way around the city and but little grass on the ground. I passed a slaughter house that smelled very bad but a few miles southwest of Chicago. There used to be heavy slough



grass about all the way across the flats to the Desplaines river and I have driven across it when it was entirely covered with ice and when I could not tell by the looks whether the water was deep or shallow. In many places there was no grass sticking through the ice and I feared that the ice might break and let the sled and horses down deeper than they could pull through. Sometimes there was no house or person in sight but on a clear day we could see clear across these flats. But it looks very different now as we cross those flats on the Burlington R. R. We see fine dwelling houses and beautiful lawns for many miles. We gener-



ROBERT SMITH, FROM A PHOTO TAKEN IN 1856.

ally took oats enough along to last our horses till we got home. We could get stable room and hay for the team over night and supper and bed and breakfast for 50 cents at the country taverns and 75 cents for the same fare in the city or towns. But I once got the same fare in Chicago for 50 cents and that was on Lake street and not far from the lake. I used to enjoy such trips when the weather and roads were good, especially when with good company. One fall we had considerable wheat to haul and William Shoudy offered to haul some to Chicago for us for 16 cents per bushel. We let him haul 2 or 3 loads and I went with

him each time and once coming home I had a barrel of salt in the wagon. We drove through a creek about 4 miles west of Aurora, and when I drove up the bank it was so steep the barrel rolled back with such force that it knocked the end board and rod out and let the barrel roll into the creek and we had to get into the muddy water to get the salt out and into the wagon again, but we only laughed at that mishap. The salt was all colored but it answered for salting stock. I had bought a large bunch of matches and the jolting of the wagon set them on fire, but I saw them in time to save part of the matches and keep them from burning anything else. At another time Nathan Nettleton, William Shoudy and I went to Chicago with three loads of wheat. Nathan was not well when we started and he kept getting worse so that I had to sell and unload his wheat and take care of his team. I think he had a doctor and took medicine but he came back with us next morning until we got two miles west of Naperville. There we all stayed with Mr. David Rogers over night and Nathan got a doctor who thought it was not safe for him to ride home until he got better, so he let me take his team home and his father took his sister, Maria, there to take care of him until he got better. It was the dysentery that he had. He afterwards married my sister, Jane, and his sister Maria married O. D. Edwards.

There was a fire in Chicago the night that Nathan Nettleton stayed there with me. Shoudy knew a man that was stopping at a tavern that was burning and he asked me to go with him to see that he got his team and wagon out all right. We took a few horses out of the burning barn and found Shoudy's friend and helped him to get his team and wagon to another tavern. Then we came back to the fire and worked on the fire engines or pumps which were worked by about 10 or 12 men. The firemen often asked for help to run the pumps or tear away parts of burning buildings. I think the tavern that burned was called the Sauganash. There were a few other buildings besides the tavern and horse barn that burned and there were a few horses and two hogs burned in another part of the barn that we did not know about when we went there to help get horses out.

William Shoudy said that when he was in Chicago at another time he saw a store burning and offered to help carry out

goods but they would not allow any carried out because if they burned they would get paid for them; but if taken out and stolen they would get nothing for the goods but he said that there was a good chance to have taken out many of the goods as it was burning slowly in the back part of the store and that makes me think of the fire trusts that the courts are investigating now. N.



SAUGANASH TAVERN.

C. Allen had quite an experience taking a load of wheat to Chicago with ox teams. I think he carried his own food and grain for his oxen but he generally let the oxen eat grass by the road side where he stopped at night. He slept in or under his wagon and he overtook some men taking a lot of cattle to Chicago, one of whom had dropped a pocketbook with considerable money in it. Inasmuch as they could not find it along the road they thought perhaps Allen had picked up the money and they got a search warrant and I think stopped him about two days, searching his clothes and bed quilts. They even emptied his wheat bags and then put the wheat back in the bags and he said when they had nearly all of them emptied and searched, they told him that if he would say that the money was not in the other bags they would quit looking for it and let him go but he said as they had so nearly finished they might as well examine the other bags and then they would feel more sure that he did not have their money.

Allen also told me there were two other men who passed in a buggy but as the tavern keeper told the men that lost the money they were honest men and would not keep their money they let them go without searching them and perhaps they may have found the money and kept it.

I think I will mention another case where an innocent man was arrested on suspicion.

Two of the Briggs boys and their brother-in-law, a Mr. Anderson, had enlisted in the Civil War in 1865. Each received \$400.00 in Lee county bonds, and some other bounty from this township (Willow Creek).

The bonds were given as a reward or inducement to enlist, so that the government would not have to draft men into the army from this place.

Briggs sold one of these bonds to his brother and one to other parties as he had to use some money before leaving home, so that he had only two of the Lee county bonds left. He and Mr. David Anderson left their bonds with Mrs. Anderson and her sister, but I have forgotten whether or not their mother was living there then, but their brother, John Briggs, was living there or near them. After that Mr. Anderson and Sylvester and Adin Briggs and N. A. and Ben Nettleton and Robert Wells and others went into camp in February, 1865, near Chicago. Both Adin Briggs and N. A. Nettleton were taken sick with pneumonia or lung fever before leaving that camp. N. A. Nettleton got a furlough and came home and died April 14th; about the same time Lincoln was assassinated. Adin Briggs' wife went into camp and took care of him till he got well and then she came home and was taken sick with the same disease that her husband had been sick with. He then got a furlough and came home to take care of his wife. She died and he then left his bonds and \$200.00 in money with me for safe keeping. He never asked for a receipt for either bonds or money and when he came home from the army he said that he had forgotten whether he had left \$100 or \$200. And another man that enlisted from this township sent me a few of his Lee county bonds from Ohio to sell for him as he wanted to use the money in Ohio. I think that all those Lee county bonds were of \$100.00 denomination and drew ten per cent interest. One day when Mrs. Anderson and her sister were

from home it rained. An agent was passing their house at the time and went into the house and I suppose he stayed there till it stopped raining. When the women came home they knew that some one had been in the house. They found that Anderson had \$200.00 more bonds than their brother. They knew that they received the same amount, but they did not know that their brother had sold any. Consequently they thought some one had stolen them. At once they had the agent arrested. Of course they found no bonds and the women and their brother, John, thought they had been lost till I saw one of the women and told her I had one of the bonds that they were looking for and that her brother had sold both bonds and that she had all that belonged to Sylvester, her brother. The Lee county bonds sold as low as \$85.00 per \$100.00, although drawing 10 per cent interest and the school trustees got me to buy \$1,500.00 for the school fund as I was township treasurer then and had enough school money on hand at that time that was to be kept at interest. I had bought about that amount of Lee county bonds for myself before the price got below par and the assessors assessed such bonds at par value when not in the hands of the soldiers. They were not assessed while held by the soldiers and at that time they were assessing other property at only one-fifth of what it would sell for so that I had to pay 5 or 6 times as high taxes on my Lee county bonds as on other property. Taxes were high in the school district that year and it took nearly all the interest to pay the taxes that year on those bonds. But since that year I think the assessors have assessed all property more nearly equal according to value. I was elected assessor and assessed the township several times, but of course could not satisfy every person, especially those that had new farms and were putting new improvements on their farms. I supposed it was my duty to assess the farms according to their value at the time I assessed them. Some seemed to think they were assessed too high as they had to pay much higher taxes than when they had little improvements on. But I think the equalization board never lowered my assessment. On the contrary they raised many others to make them about equally as high as I had assessed this township. Of course none of the land or other property was assessed for near as much as it would sell for as the assessors had agreed to assess all prop-



erty at one-third or one-fourth of what it would sell for and they did so yet in 1912.

But I will tell a little of my experience in bad roads while assessing this township, Willow Creek. Once I tried to drive north from where Scarboro now is to the north township line. I got into mud and water nearly three feet deep and the team



DAVID SMITH AT 70 YEARS OF AGE.

would not go further. I had to unhitch and take the wagon box off, then uncouple the wagon and get the wheels loose. I then turned two wheels at a time. Next I put the wagon tongue on the south end, replaced the wagon box and seat, all the while working in the mud and water nearly three feet deep. I then hitched the team on again and started south, but I soon came to



a plank bridge. This was so high above the mud that the team would not pull the wagon onto the bridge so I unhitched the team again and got it on the bridge. I then tied the eavener to the end of the wagon tongue and hitched the team to the whiffletrees and pulled the wagon on the bridge. Then the martengale I had tied the eavener to the tongue with, broke. Fortunately the wagon did not roll back into the mud so the horses had no trouble starting when I hitched on to it again and started for home with my wet and muddy clothes on and without assessing any more that day. At another time I was assessing along the north side of the township when I came to a bad slough. I saw some men at work near it and I asked if I could drive through it, but they did not seem to understand. I tried to make myself understood but they showed no signs of having any idea of what I wanted to know. I was suspicious that they wanted me to find out how bad it was so that I might use my influence to get that slough bridged as soon as possible because they did not like to have people driving through their fields as they had to or else go a few miles around on another road. I supposed they were Norwegians and perhaps had not been in this country long enough to understand what I wanted. I sometimes had to get some of the children to interpret while assessing some of the Norwegians, especially if it were women I talked to. They did not learn English as soon as the men or children. I saw tracks across the slough so I concluded to try it. I think if the team had not been quick and spry, they would have got stuck so fast somebody would have been needed to haul us out. As it was they sank about four feet at every jump. I got across but would not like to try it again for the price of a horse.

I have had both cattle and horses stuck in places no worse than that slough and one of the horses two years old and some of the cattle were dead before I found them. I think the tracks I saw across that slough were made while it had been frozen in the winter. I remember, too, while father had but two oxen, that one of them got stuck in a slough near home so that he had to send to PawPaw to get a man with oxen and a long rope to pull it out. I have had to haul one of my horses and a number of cattle out of that same slough and other sloughs both for myself and my sister, Jane Nettleton, since I have been running this

farm. One of her cows I pulled out three times, then I tried to haul it home to my place and kept her out of the mud till the sloughs got more solid, but she got off the stone boat to get back with the other cattle so we drove her to my place and kept her here till she had a calf and she got along nicely. One night about bed time, I went to look to see if my own cattle were all right as I knew that there was a very muddy place in the yard where the cattle had tramped across the slough very often. I found one stuck in the mud and I got Ed. Hopps, then living here when he was a boy, to come and we hitched up a team and pulled the heifer to a dry place, where we rubbed the mud off from her and put straw around her to try to keep her comfortable, but the other cattle soon found her and began hooking her and made a great bellowing. I kept them off with a pitchfork, then I got Ed. Hopps to keep the cattle from hooking her while I got one of the small doors off the cow barn for a stone boat. She was too exhausted to walk; the cattle had rolled her back into the mud again, so we put her on the stone boat and hauled her into my wagon shed and kept her there till she got well.

## CHAPTER X.

### Drainage, Hog Cholera, Dehorning the Cattle

Perhaps it may seem foolish to write so much about such incidents, but as I am confined to the house with what the doctor calls rheumatic gout, and some of my relatives have asked me to write some incidents of my early recollections, and as I get tired or drowsy reading, I write for a change and I write entirely from memory about whatever I think of at the time of writing, although some of the incidents mentioned in the preceding pages happened more than 76 years ago they still seem fresh in my memory, however. I had written more than 30 pages about two years ago, but they were mislaid and I did not find them till I had written many of the same incidents lately. Now, in March, 1913, I think of another incident that amused me a little when a man that was pressing hay for me had one of his horses stuck in the slough in my pasture. When he found his horse there Wm. Hopps and I went to help him get it out. He began to swear and said I might have told him there was such a place in my pasture so that he would not have left his horse there. But I began to joke him and tell him that he had better be saying his prayers than swear; that we might all of us sink. Then we carried tough hay and made a path for his horse to walk on. At the same time we helped the horse to get on the hay and he led it along the hay patch and got it out without hauling it out as I had to haul one of my horses from the same slough. But my horse had sunk much deeper and was in a much softer part of the slough than his was. It was so soft near where my horse was stuck that I pushed a ten-foot pole down the whole length and pulled it out with but little effort. None of my horses or cattle have got stuck in it for many years although I never have found a deep enough outlet to tile the deepest part of that slough. I have tiled part of the same slough and about all the other sloughs on my farm so that we often get large crops of corn in them and as the most

of sloughs near here are tiled it is not likely horses or cattle will get stuck in the mud as frequently as they used to many years ago. I am sure if the last one of my horses had not been blind that she would never have gone so far into the slough because animals have a chance to go around the worst part of it.

When Harley Nettleton was working their farm at this grove, he hired John Braffet to help make a well. They found plenty of water at about 40 feet depth I think. But they had to put in board curbing before getting near that depth. I think that about 10 feet of the bottom part of the well was so solid they did not use any curbing till they bricked it up and when they had bricked up the board curbing Braffet took the board curbing out of the way to make room for the brick straight up, but it caved in so quickly that Braffet would not work in that well any more. He offered to help dig another well about 30 feet from it, however, and as they thought they did not need so much water as they had in the first well, they did not dig it as deep by 2 or 3 feet. From there they bored down till they thought they had struck the same water vein they had in the first well. Then they plugged the auger hole to keep the water back till they got it bricked up. After that they tried to let the water in but could not find much water although they bored holes in many directions. So Harley Nettleton got gas pipe cut in short lengths, so he could bore across to try to hit the water vein in the first hole well and when he had bored the whole length of his gas pipe the water began to run in and I think that they have had plenty of water there ever since. I had quite an experience with my well near my dwelling house. I only dug it 17 feet deep at first and bored about 4 feet, then the water came in so fast that I thought there would be plenty of water and we got along with it quite well for a few years. N. C. Allen and I had stoned it up with the common prairie stone, or hardheads as they are often called; but when the well failed to supply enough water I had the stone taken out and had it dug about 9 feet deeper. The quicksand there, however, about 21 feet depth, compelled me to curb it with boards. After that we made wooden wheels or circles to keep the boards from being pushed in by the sand. Then we took 8-foot fence boards and sharpening the lower ends we drove them down fast, and the man dug inside of the boards. When we got

the top of the boards down to the quicksand we quit driving them further but the man that was digging began bricking it on a wooden circle and sank that a foot or two below the board. Then he bricked it up inside of the boards and left the boards and bottom circle in the well. I suppose they are there still unless



DAVID SMITH AT 50 YEARS OF AGE.

they have rotted, but I feel sure they will not rot for many years because they are nearly always under water. There was so much water in the well after deepening it that it soon smelled so bad we could not use it for the house till I got a wind mill and kept it pumped out. After that it was fresh and good and I suppose it has supplied more stock and steam engines than any other well

in the neighborhood. I think I will tell some of my experience with hog cholera as I have had it on my farm three times. But as hogs were so low priced the first time I think that there was not much loss because the corn I would have fed to them if they had lived to be grown up and made fat, actually sold for more than the hogs would have brought. I think I sold about all of the large hogs before they got sick as the young hogs got sick first that time. I had about eighty of them but all but seven died and they were sick so long there was no profit in keeping them. Both other times I had the hog cholera on my farm I sold about all my hogs that were well and large enough to attract buyers before many got sick. But I tried to keep a sow and her little pigs that were separate from all the others. I also tried to keep about 12 or 15 of the smallest shoats each time; but the sow and all her pigs died and all but one of the small shoats died each time and one of them got lame so there was no profit in keeping it. But the next one was a fine, healthy sow and she raised a fine litter of pigs the next year. She used to run with the cattle and horses for company the first winter; but while running in the field she got in company with Mr. Bughsley's calves and stayed with them till I went for her. In the spring I bought six other sows intending to raise pigs from them. Some one had left a gate open and they were found eating part of a hog that had died of cholera. I thought they had taken that disease as one of them got sick, so I sold the five that were well and let the buyer ship the other and I only kept the one sow that summer. After that I generally bought the most of the shoats or thin hogs that I fattened. Before having the hog cholera on the farm I sometimes raised 150 pigs or more in a year and at one time had more than 300 old and young hogs at the same time. Once I took 91 to PawPaw at once that averaged 416 lbs. I had sold one carload of them to Mr. Menke for \$3.75 per 100, but before he shipped them he offered me \$4.25 for another carload of hogs so we took both carloads off at the same time.

The price had been much lower for some time so I kept putting off selling any till they got as high as \$3.75 before selling. That accounts for being very fat and heavy before selling. The price kept rising so that hogs were worth \$5.00 per 100 before spring. But I think that Mr. Manke did not make much on that



purchase as six of that lot died while being shipped to Chicago. I think that he put too many in a car and they were too large and fat.

I think I will tell some of my experience about having cattle dehorned. I had one horse killed and several cattle badly hurt. Some, no doubt, would have been killed if I had not got to them in time to save them. Others were hooked or pushed into the hay racks on their backs so that they died sometimes before being found. I knew of both men and women being badly hurt. I was well acquainted with a man in this township that was killed by being horned by a bull. I had read and heard of many such accidents. I had read, too, of Mr. Haffs' success in dehorning many cattle without losing any so I got his little book telling how he dehorned his cattle. I read many other articles against and in favor of dehorning but I had never seen it done. But some of my cows frequently got loose in the barn and would hook others that were held in the stanchions so that they would bellow till some one got there. I resolved therefore to take their horns off although many said it was too cruel. I thought it did not hurt them as badly as they frequently hurt each other with their horns, so I took a handsaw and ropes and help, and took the horns off all of my cows and they all got well nicely. I had no more trouble from any of that lot of cows hooking each other. If any of them got their heads out of the stanchions they never disturbed the others as they did not seem to enjoy hooking unless they made them bellow. One of them had real sharp horns and would go at the others quickly and fiercely. I saw her once knock a steer into the water tank and some time after her horns were taken off I saw her shake her head at the same steer ordering him to get away, but he looked at her in a very unconcerned manner, almost like telling her he was no longer afraid as he saw she had no horns.

Many of the neighbors began to get the horns taken off their cattle. Some men fixed racks to hold the cattle in while dehorning, taking the racks around with them to dehorn cattle for others for a certain price for each one dehorned. I think I only heard of two cattle dying from the effects of being dehorned. One of them was said to have bled to death about a week after being dehorned and I thought perhaps the other might have been in-

fect because the saw was not cleaned before beginning to dehorn. I had a large bull dehorned that started bleeding badly after being chased around by the other cattle. They saw they could drive him after he was dehorned, so I had to keep him away from the others till his head had healed up good.

I saw a fine lot of large steers that James Pulver was fattening many years ago. They were all eating out of one feed-box. They had no horns; they stood quietly eating about as closely as they could stand. I thought that that was a good argument in favor of dehorning because if part or all of them had



DAVID SMITH PUTTING OATS IN HIS GRANARY WHILE THRESHING  
3,000 BUSHEL IN ONE DAY.

horns, they would have been driving each other around and dropping their corn in the mud and perhaps less than half of them would eat at the one box at the same time.

I think I will write some of my experience having tiling done as I have had more experience about getting such work done than most men have had. I have had other small farms tiled that I have sold since besides the farm that I have now as I began tiling nearly 40 years ago. Some years before tile were kept for sale at PawPaw or any of the nearest railroad stations, I went to Utica for the first tile that I bought and I hauled some

loads from the tile yards at Hinckley and Earlville before they sold or made them at PawPaw. I only used 2-inch tile at first and they answered first rate for short distance unless they got filled with dirt by the cattle tramping at the outlet. Before I had seen any tile I drained my cellar by using two boards 6 inches wide two 2-inch strips between and as many lengths as necessary. This method drained the cellar good at first but the hogs filled the outlet so that the water could not run that way. Naturally it run into the cellar till it got about 2 feet deep. The outlet should always be well protected both to keep the cattle from tramping the tile full and to keep muskrats or skunks from crawling as far up as they can and dying there. I had one tile stopped in that way by a muskrat. The man that was tiling, in trying to find where it was stopped up dug several places but he did not find the obstruction till I followed the tile ditch down till I came to the lower and wettest place, where the water came to the surface. Then I had him dig there and he found the muskrat and also a piece of board that had floated down from where he had quit tiling in the fall before. And my brother Robert had some tile stopped up in the same way by a skunk that had crawled up till it got to tile that was too small for it and it could not turn back, so it died there. I read of a man that found eleven muskrats all dead in one place in his tile. I frequently have had tile taken up as the parties that put them in failed to put them as deep as they did in the slough but I generally had the men that were putting the tile in, leave them uncovered so that I could see whether they were put in right before covering them and then fill the ditch mostly with the use of plow or plank scraper after putting a little dirt on the tile with a spade to keep the tile from being moved. Sometimes we had the men take them up the second time before getting them deep enough. But once the men that were putting tile in for me dug much too deep at the outlet of the slough as they worked without a level or anything to guide them. They got the ditch about 8 feet deep where it should have been 6 only, making it at least a foot deeper than it was about 15 rods further down, so they dug further down the outlet to let the water run from where they had dug deepest. When they came back to work at the deepest place again it caved in and killed one of the men, a Mr. Reams, and I could not get the other

man (Mr. Carl) to finish the job, so I paid him for what he had done and tried to get others to do the job. Two or three different men agreed to do it but they failed. So I sold that farm to Thomas Wells and he had it surveyed and a new ditch made along beside the one Mr. Carl and Mr. Reams had dug. He made it only  $5\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep where Reams and Carl had made it about 8 feet as I had let them do their own surveying because Mr. Carl was quite an old hand at tiling. I think, however, that he has never worked at it since that fatal accident to his partner or employe; but there was no occasion for having such an accident, as Mr. Wells told me the tile he had put in worked good although more than 2 feet less depth than the ditch Carl and Reams dug. Before I began tiling my farm, there were many sloughs or low places that would have water in when we were putting in the crops, and that made it very unhandy especially while planting corn with a checkrower. At such times we had to drive through mud and water or turn at each side of those wet places and if we got the planter wet or muddy so that the corn would stick to the planter runners or shoes, it would not leave the corn in the hills. Some of the sloughs would often have water in the whole year and some of them often produced much larger crops especially of corn than the high lands do now. One large slough got on fire and burned the turf for a month or two and it does not produce nearly as large crops where the turf is burned off. We tried to put the fire out but did not succeed. As the Norwegian, my hired man, expressed himself, he said that "water will not kill that fire." But I suppose if we had had a few carloads of water and lots of help it might have been put out. I heard that the railroad company put out a fire of that kind near their track between Lee and Shabbona in that way. But my slough took fire in many places about the same time as the turf took fire while my hired men were burning off the slough grass so that we could plow it better. And the turf kept burning deeper and deeper as it dried down to the tile and burned over the same place two or three times. One night, Howlett's folks sent for help to put out the fire in their corn field as the turf had burned beyond where we had burned the grass off and was burning their corn field, but they put the fire out before it had done much damage. It burned my board fence, however, where the

•

turf burned, after we had burned the grass off and we had thought the fence and corn field were safe. But the fire helped kill the willows I had planted by an open ditch through that slough before I had thought of tiling it and they had bent or broken down in the wettest part of the slough and grown and made quite a forest of willows there but the fire killed the most of them. But some places I have tiled where there is often more water running than the tile would hold and it has washed all the dirt off the tile even where they were covered nearly 3 feet deep when first put in. I suppose I better have the tile put in a little to one side of the ditch where the water runs swiftly.

## CHAPTER XI.

### Wild Game of Early Days

Perhaps some of my friends would like to have me tell a little about the wolves so frequently seen going either from the timber to the cultivated field or back to the timber. I think they hunt for rabbits or squirrels or mice, in both places. When I used to raise a lot of pigs, they would sometimes take one of them. One of my neighbors told me he saw a wolf running from near my buildings to the grove with a pig in its mouth and while my brother Robert lived on his farm, he had a calf killed by wolves. Soon after that I saw two large prairie wolves in my field as I was starting to husk corn with my hired man. At that we stopped. I got my rifle and had the man drive as though he was going to pass about 15 rods one side of the nearest wolf, then we stopped when we got within that distance. I fired at it and the ball nearly broke its back so that it could not run fast; but it ran as fast as it could and I ran after it and soon overtook it, struck at it with the rifle, but it stopped instantly and bit the rifle, leaving the mark of its teeth in the barrel. By stopping so suddenly under my feet, I fell on the wolf but I caught it by the throat so it could not bite me. It was so badly wounded that it did not try to fight much and my hired man drove over with the wagon and helped kill it. At another time, a wolf came within 20 or 30 rods of where I was working in the field. I sent a boy that worked for me then for my rifle, and while he was gone the wolf came to within 20 or 30 rods of where I was working again. At this point I had the boy ride back between the grove and the wolf, hoping to take its attention so that I could get near enough to shoot it, but it ran past the boy and into the grove. When I was going back to work I looked into a hole in our old sod fence and saw a young wolf which I shot and while I was skinning it the old wolf came back within 60 or 80 rods of me and took another young wolf in its mouth and ran into the grove with it as



fast as it could. I ran to where it got the young wolf and found another there which I caught in my hands and killed as my gun was not loaded. But I loaded it at once and hid nearby for hours hoping the wolf would return so that I could shoot it, but when it came in sight it was very shy and kept far to one side although I thought I was pretty well concealed from sight. I suppose it had carried one of its young further from the spot where we were at work each time that I saw it come toward me, but had not time to get the other till the boy came with the rifle and I shot it. I think those three wolves were all I ever killed although they are frequently seen near here yet, and my renter, Walter Barringer, fired at one near my corn crib a few months ago. I have fired at others myself but think I did not hit any of them as they were either running or too far from me. As there were only three young wolves with that old one I think her mate probably was taking care of part of their young, as they generally have six or eight at a time. Once one of the Stubbs boys found about that number in a straw or hay stack near this grove and J. S. Pulver found as many in a hole in the ground near his farm and I think he killed the old wolf also. I think too that one of his sons had killed an old wolf near their house that perhaps was the mate to the one his father killed. I still keep the same muzzle-loading rifle I had when a boy. Uncle John Colville made me a present of it when I was about 14 years old as I was quite fond of hunting when I was young, but I never had any of the repeating or fast shooting guns like some use lately. Deer were getting so shy before I got my rifle that we seldom could get near enough to shoot them; but brother Robert shot one with my rifle. As the deer used to come in the grove about dark and start out again as soon as it began to get a little daylight, it was generally too dark to shoot while they were in the timber. On the open prairie the deer could generally see so far, unless they were in deep hollows, that they would generally keep beyond gunshot. But Robert saw three deer coming toward him one day before it got very dark. He waited behind a tree till they got near enough and then shot one and cut its throat and held it till it quit struggling, but when he quit holding it, it jumped up and ran so far he could not find it. I went to Howletts and got his son George and their dog, and the dog soon found it. It had run nearly 80 rods after

its throat was cut. For quite a number of years after we settled here there were no houses on the north side of this or Allen's grove or on the prairie anywhere near here except close to the groves and the deer used to come into these groves very much in the winters as the prairies were generally burned off so that deer got most of their winter feed in the groves, such as leaves, twigs and acorns. Old Mr. H. G. Howlett used to kill several deer every winter for several years after he came here in 1839 and his son George told me a man who was boarding with them shot two female deer at one shot. One of them had twins in it and the other one fawn in it, so that he said he killed five deer at one shot.

I think I never killed but one deer and that was in the creek about four miles northwest of here. My youngest brother and I took my rifle and an old shotgun expecting to find some ducks or geese in the creek as the sloughs were about all dry and only the deepest places in the creek contained water. We did not see any geese or ducks that time but saw two small deer in a deep place close to the water. I shot one of them, but before shooting, when I looked along the sights of the rifle I thought they looked so much like young colts that I dare not shoot till I looked up two or three times to be very sure they were not colts. I only had a small pocket knife to cut its throat and skin and dress it with, but when I had that done I cut it in two where the ball had gone through its back and let my brother carry half of the flesh while I took the other half and the skin and both guns as I was about 15 years old and my brother only 9. Thus we marched home across the prairie with our loads which were heavy enough before we got home although the deer was not large. I have fired at two or three other deer but at so great a distance I did not hit them, but I put a ball in one that a large dog of Shoudy's had by the throat. I feel sure it was dead before I fired, as it did not move either when I fired or when I cut its throat. The snow was frozen on top but the deer's feet cut through while the dog could run on the snow without breaking through the top crust of ice. Besides the Allen and Shoudy boys had been chasing the deer a long time the day before I found it. But when it got dark they left the deer in Allen's grove till next morning and they asked me to help find it as they said it was so sore footed it

would not run much. We boys went in different directions in Allen's grove and I was the first to find it but as the dog had it by the throat I did not know but it might still run like the one that brother Robert killed, so I thought best to shoot it and when the other boys heard me shoot they all came to where I was and we took the deer to Shoudy's house and divided the flesh among us, letting Shoudys have the skin as their dog caught the deer.

The coons were the most valuable game animals we had near here next to the deer after we came. There is little or no doubt but that the buffalo used to be here many years before we came here as there were many large bones on the prairie when we came here. I think they were buffalo bones because old chief Shabona said a hard winter and deep snow had killed all of the buffaloes in this part of the country many years before. Although the coons were not numerous, brother Robert told me that he got six or seven in a hollow tree or stump in the winter of 1842 and 1843. That was while I was stopping at the Hopps place at Wheeling, Cook county, Illinois. I have killed a few but never found more than two together. While I was going to school at Allen's Grove I took a little walk at noon in the grove and saw a large coon on a tree. At once I went and borrowed Mr. Shoudy's gun, a double barrel shot gun. He said one barrel was loaded with large shot and the other with small shot and to save the large shot unless I needed it, but the small shot only made the coon climb much higher till he came to another large coon and when I fired the large shot both coons tumbled down. William Shoudy and his dogs had come there with me and the coons tried to fight the dogs after being shot and falling 40 or 50 feet but we helped the dogs and soon killed them. Some nights our dog would run a coon up a tree and keep it there till morning when I would shoot him. My folks never cooked the coon's flesh but I have eaten some at other places. I do not know what they live on but I have heard they would kill and eat chickens. I never knew that they caught any of my chickens but I know the minks did, and I shot one while it had hold of a chicken trying to pull it under a wood pile. I caught another one in my hands and killed it, when our dog had run it under a reaper. It was watching the dog so closely I reached under the other side of the reaper and caught it and pulled it under my knee and kept it

there till I got my knife out and killed it, but it bit my knee although it did not get its teeth very deep through my pants. I have killed other minks and coons; but as their skins sold for very low prices when I was young, I hunted mostly for birds that we could eat, like ducks and geese and cranes and prairie chickens and the wild pigeons which used to be around here in large flocks. But I have not seen a wild pigeon for many years. The cranes, too, very seldom fly past here now, but they used to have their nests in sloughs on top of muskrat houses near here and some of our neighbors used to tame both cranes and wild geese and ducks. Sometimes these pets would fly off with the wild ones when others of the same kind passed, unless some of their feathers were kept shortened. I have been told that tame cranes were extra good at catching mice. Although cranes were our largest birds here they would fly very high. They would sometimes circle around and keep going higher till they got out of sight and they seldom flew in large flocks like geese or ducks or many other birds but I think I have seen at least 30 or 40 at once, close to our corn field. They seemed to be fond of new corn but were shy about getting far in among the corn stalks as I suppose they wanted a chance to see if any persons came too near them. Sometimes I fired at them with the rifle and twice I only broke one wing and while they could run faster than I could my dog got ahead of it. He would not take hold of it as it would fight and when I got almost near enough to catch it, it would start to run again. But the dog soon got ahead of it and stopped it and I went within 6 or 8 feet of it and stopped and then made a quick jump to catch it. But it jumped at me and picked me on the throat. At last I caught it by the neck and killed it and the other one whose wing I had broken, I shot the second time as the dog was not with me. Once, one of my hired men took his gun in the field with him and shot a crane and when he came to the house he was so careless getting out of the wagon with his gun he discharged the gun and shot one of my colts so badly that we had to have it killed.

Soon after we raised crops of grain in this country the geese and ducks would alight in large numbers in the stubble or when we sowed wheat in the fall the geese which were very fond of the tender blades of the wheat would come so thick that we could

often shoot more than one at a shot. One of the first settlers at Twin Grove told me he had killed three ducks at one shot with his rifle, they were so thick in the water in that grove, and he said he shot an otter there. Brother Robert said he saw another otter there but it went down in the water so quickly he had no chance to shoot it. The geese often got so thick in our field after I got old enough to hunt them that I frequently killed two at one shot. I once put a rifle ball through the body of two geese at one shot but they both flew nearly 80 rods after being shot.

The prairie chickens and quails were our commonest game bird as they stayed here the whole year and there was no law against killing them at any time. Many years ago I heard that Sidney Hastings shot eleven prairie chickens at one shot. His folks had corn that was not husked till very late so that the prairie chickens gathered there in great numbers and would often sit on the fence very thickly, so that when Hastings fired length ways of the fence he found in one instance he had killed eleven. My brother Alexander killed eleven quails at one shot and I killed eight wild pigeons at one shot as they had lit very thickly around where we had threshed.

## CHAPTER XII.

### Social Life of the Pioneers

I think that I will write a little about the sociable meetings, preachings and Sunday schools of the early settlers in this part of the country before we had telephones or automobiles or many of the conveniences that are so common now.

I remember going with father and mother to hear preaching in Mr. David Town's barn, 75 years ago, and not long after that I went with father to hear a Mormon preach in a log house south of Paw Paw Grove, and father said that his preaching was nearly the same as other preachers. I think the first Sunday school that I attended was in one of Mr. Shoudy's log houses. Mr. Shoudy had brought a few Sunday school books from Rock Island when he moved to Allen's Grove. Here he started a little Sunday school in one of his log houses with only his family and Howletts and my folks to attend. Dr. Basford was living there and had a daughter, nearly woman-grown, and another girl that was quite small, but I think they took no part in either the Sunday or other day schools. The doctor tried to teach the school at Paw Paw one winter, but some of the larger boys put him out of the house and he gave up the school. He only stayed at Allen's Grove a few years. I heard that he settled south of Peru and that his daughter was married there and a lot of boys came to charivari the parties and that the doctor treated them to cakes that had emetic in which soon had the boys vomiting. A paper that published the account of it added, "We think that the doctor deserves a new hat."

I noticed a mistake in one of the Lee county histories that said Martha Vandeventer taught the first school here or in this township. There were three teachers who taught one term each before Martha Vandeventer taught. I think she taught the first summer school in this township. I never attended any summer



school after I was old enough to work much on the farm but I went to school the three first winters that we had school at Allen's Grove or in this township. The first was taught in one of Shoudy's log houses by Clarissa Price when I was 13 years old. I remember she gave us words to spell and define that we should remember the next day and on the last day of school she gave us words to remember till we saw her again but I have never seen her since. I still remember the word she gave me. Simoon—a hot, sultry wind, in sandy deserts. Next winter, Eliza Nettleton taught in the same house and we had a little larger school as some of her brothers came with her. Our next school was taught by Laura Brace in the Basford house as he had moved away. She was so poor in arithmetic the directors thought of dismissing her and Mr. Shoudy asked me to teach the school as I was so good in arithmetic but I told him I would not take charge of the school but that I would help the teacher or pupils in arithmetic. I never charged for help of that kind because I liked to do it. So the directors let her teach her term out. George Howlett used to boast that our little school had the best speller, best penman and best in arithmetic of any school near us. My sister was extra good at spelling and she said she could remember how a word looked in print so that she could spell any word correctly that she could remember having seen in print; George Howlett was a good penman and I was as good in arithmetic. Sometimes one of the schools from Paw Paw or Shabbona would visit our school and try to spell our school down. Each person was to sit down as soon as he misspelled a word. Sometimes our school would visit their schools and try to spell their school down or sometimes two of the pupils would choose spellers from either school and try which had selected the best spellers. I think that was a more friendly way than matching one school against the other. We always went in large wagons or sleighs and sat down on the hay in the wagon box, as we had no buggies or automobiles at that time, and we nearly always went in the evenings after school hours. Of course the school where we were to meet was notified when to expect us.

After the Sunday school at Allen's Grove was closed, a Mrs. McKnight started one in her house about half a mile north of East Paw Paw and sometimes we went there on foot and some-

times some of the Nettletons would go with us either with their team or ours.

I remember once while walking home from there I saw a duck's nest on a muskrat's mound but the water had risen above the eggs and they were mixed with the moss and partly out of sight. While I was taking them out I picked up quite a fair sized black snake alive. It was under water and among the eggs and moss so I did not see it till I lifted it; then I threw it and ran and did not wait to hunt any more duck eggs that Sunday. After that, while gathering the hens' eggs at home I found a large snake coiled around some eggs and I thought I was fortunate not to have been bitten, as the nest was rather high to look in before reaching my hand into the nest; but I killed the snake and threw it and the eggs and nest away.

I think I have been quite fortunate never to have been bitten while rattlesnakes were common. Both of my brothers were bitten and although I went barefoot more then either of them, I never was bitten. Once I stepped on a rattlesnake while I was barefoot but it was coiled so that it could not get its head loose till I got off, but that was very quickly. While binding grain by hand, as we always used to do, we sometimes found a rattlesnake under the bundles. Once while changing work in harvest with the Ellsworths, old Mr. Ellsworth told me he found a rattlesnake under a bundle but did not tell the other binders as he thought that they would be looking under every bundle before binding it so that they would not get near as much binding done. While father kept sheep we lost several that we felt sure were bitten by snakes. I think that a rattlesnake bite is about sure death for a sheep but I have read that hogs would kill and eat the snakes without injury. Their bite is sometimes fatal to both people and horses and one of the neighbors lost a son about a year after being bitten. It was thought that it was from the effect of the bite. I have heard that it generally or always showed some of the effect of the poison in about a year after the bite. My brother Robert's leg turned quite spotted the next summer after he was bitten.

But I will leave the snake stories and tell more about the early Sunday schools.

After keeping it in Mrs. McKnight's house a while they got

the use of a large upper room in a hotel about half a mile west of East Paw Paw and I think that old Mr. Grover was superintendent or principal manager. There they kept the Sunday school for a while although they sold whisky in the bar-room below us. I think they soon united with the Sunday school kept by old Mr. Pine a little south of East Paw Paw.

I remember of going to a Sunday school picnic there one 4th of July about 70 years ago when we had a thunder shower and very loud thunder. Old Mr. Pine was telling the children not to be afraid and as soon as they heard the thunder that the danger of the flash was passed. But a large red oak tree in our grove was torn to pieces the most effectually I ever saw done. Most of the tree was torn into slivers or chips and the ground for many rods around the tree was strewn with small pieces of bark and slivers. I think old Mr. Pine was a real good man and well liked by nearly everyone that knew him. He lived to be nearly 100 years old.

I remember that one of the Sunday schools made me a present of a nice Sunday school book and I kept it carefully for many years but am not sure whether I can find it yet as I have many books. The cover was getting loose when I remember it last but I still remember the title was "Stories From the German."

After we had a school house built at Allen's Grove, when I was about 19 years old, we began having preaching and Sunday school in it. I had helped build it and planed about all of the siding for it by hand. I also planed all the outside lumber for my horse barn that I built when I was about 20. I had cut trees and hauled the logs to near South Paw Paw and had them sawed into roof boards and small timbers to build the barn with. The sawmill there was run by about 12 horses. But about all the large timbers for sills, posts, beams, plates and purline plates were trees that I cut and hewed and framed mostly alone as my two brothers did most of the farm work that year. The barn is 26x36 feet and is still in use on my farm and looks good in 1915. It has been shingled and painted several times. I had also cut and hauled a number of logs to that sawmill two years before to be used in building a barn that Sam and Eri Butler and Frank Ellsworth built for us in 1849. After the sawmill was moved

from South Paw Paw I hauled quite a number of logs to a saw-mill of the same kind at Melugin's Grove to be sawed into roof boards and other things to build our first frame house and a cow barn. The pine lumber we bought at different places but that for the first barns was bought in Chicago before the railroads were built. The lumber was all rough just as it was sawed so that the carpenters had to work the moldings or fancy work all by hand and the siding was sawed the same thickness on both edges.

I think old Mr. Warriner and Mr. Sturgeon from South Paw Paw preached longer in our school house than any of the others, but a Mr. Sedith and a Mr. Breed of East Paw Paw each preached for us considerably and so did Mr. Brewer, Mr. Baker and a Mr. Reack. We had others for a few times.

I think the most interesting and successful donation that we had at our school house at Allen's Grove was for old Mr. Warriner. As he was well liked the people came quite a distance and we had a good large attendance. I took a lot of nice apples to sell for the donation and George Thompson volunteered to sell them singly or in small numbers and he said that when he could not find others that would buy he had to depend on me to buy some to treat the children. So he took in a lot of dimes or nickels for the apples and when he counted what he had got for apples he said he might have got more if he had exerted himself; but we all thought he had exerted himself to the best of his ability. When they had counted all that was donated they found they had nearly \$100. Ben Nettleton proposed to sell tickets to draw for a nice cake that was not used for supper and make up the even hundred dollars; but old Mr. Warriner was opposed to anything like a lottery so they made up the \$100 in some other way.

As surprise parties were quite common for a while both before and after the Civil War, I will write a little about some of them. Someone that had a team and sled or wagon would get a few friends or perhaps a whole load of them and drive to friends without sending any notice that they were coming. If they were late in getting there, sometimes part of the young folks would be in bed before the company arrived; but they were generally so glad to see their friends that they would get up and welcome them and visit and play games or sing for a few hours.

I went with such a load once when it rained soon after we got there. The rain continued till morning so that we did not start for home till daylight and then the water was so deep in one slough we had to cross that it nearly came into the sleigh box; but there was a plank bridge in the middle of the slough that was above water but on each side of it it was quite deep for quite a distance. A dog that had followed us came as far as the bridge but did not dare come further then; I do not know how long it stayed on the bridge but it did not get home for a day or two. It belonged to my hired man and was stopping here. At another time I went with such a load to a neighbor's where the woman had a brother visiting that was home from the army on a furlough as he had been sick for some time. His sister feared that it might make him worse to visit with so many. So we all came back to my house and visited here a while. At another time I was stopping at a hotel in Geneva, Illinois, over night, when such a party came there and sang and visited for a long time. They had been at a neighbor's and thought they were not welcome so they came to the hotel to finish their visit with each other; and in the morning the landlord apologized for having such a noisy lot disturbing my sleep, but I told him I enjoyed it as I was fond of hearing singing.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### **“Yankee Bill,”—The Old Time Peddler— Inlet Swamp—A Hunt for Goose and Duck Eggs**

I think Wm. Rusk, or “Yankee Bill” as he was generally called, peddled near here the longest and was the best known and the best liked of any of the peddlers that came around here. I used to think he was doing a thriving business as he used to drive a nice little span of mules with a fine large peddler’s wagon; but I think he never made very much money. Indeed, I think he died quite poor, but for many of his later years I think he did not sell or carry much except essences that I think he mixed or manufactured at home. I remember when my niece, Mrs. Barringer, was a little girl, how glad she was when he came; she would run and gather eggs for us to trade with “Yankee Bill” when she knew he was coming. He was here once when some of the Sunday schools had a big picnic in my pasture and he sold a great many packages of pop corn, nuts or candy for the children. Once he told me of being stopped one night when he was sure they intended to rob him. He said he was driving after dark to get to his home in Somonauk when his mules stopped suddenly and he saw a man holding them and another man standing beside the wagon. He was so sure they intended to rob him he did not wait for any words with them but jumped off on the other side of his wagon and fired at the man who was holding his mules, when both men ran away. He then got on his wagon and went home in a hurry but he said he did not know whether he hit the man he fired at or not but said that he heard that a man had called at a doctor’s office to have a wound dressed and he thought the man he fired at may have had a flesh wound.

I think I have not written about our hunt for goose and duck eggs in the swamp north of Melugin’s grove. I had heard they laid and hatched there in great numbers and when I was



nearly grown up I had quite a desire to see what was there, so I made a little boat of a few boards. But as father wanted us to get all of our corn planted before going we did that first and then invited a few friends to go with brother Alexander and me for a hunt or outing. We drove to the east edge of the swamp and put the boat in the water and pushed it a long distance as the water was so shallow the boat would rub on the moss or-turf in the bottom, especially if more than one were in the boat. So we let N. C. Allen take the boat and Wm. Shoudy and I waded in the water from one to two feet deep for about a mile, but we found such a number of drifts of rushes and other stuff that grows in swamps, that we could walk easily. Some were ten or fifteen rods long and three or four rods wide; but I never knew what caused such drifts unless it was the ice and high water that had pulled up the rushes and other stuff and then the wind may have blown them into drifts. The part of the drifts that was above water burned fiercely and we burned a number of them and when Wm. Shoudy and I had gone into the swamp as far as we dared to go we saw that by going about half a mile south we could have green grass to walk on around to where we had left the team and smaller boys that had come with us; so Shoudy and I decided to walk around on the green grass as we had burned about all of the drifts we had walked on. We had to wade in the water about all the way if we went straight toward our team. But when we got on the green grass we found the ground was not solid but would settle and shake when we walked on it and we feared there was water under it and that we might break through the turf on top. I have read about such places in other places. I think that Shoudy was more afraid than I was as he would only walk behind me and when I said to him we would have some experience to tell the boys when we got to the wagon if we had not found any geese or ducks' eggs. He said, "If we ever do get there." But we did find one crane's nest on a muskrat's mound but the eggs were rotten. When Allen got back with the boat he said he thought he had gone about three miles into the swamp and that the water kept getting a little deeper the further he went and that he saw lots of young ducks and geese but that they could swim so well he could not catch any of them. We saw a large flock of cranes near where we left the wagon

when we first came near there, but none of us saw any old ducks or geese or any of their old nests and we wondered where those that Allen saw had hatched out. We saw no signs of old nests on the drifts of rushes. But perhaps there may have been still larger or higher drifts further into the swamp where they may have hatched out. But I think that none of us cared to investigate any further and never tried it again. I think that about the whole of that swamp is drained and farmed now but much of it is sometimes flooded or covered with water at times.

I shot a bird near that swamp that I think was different from any I have ever seen since or before. It was about the size and color of a bluejay but had a plume of a single feather about 5 inches long and about one-third of an inch wide. I tried to save the plume for a curiosity. I used it for a book mark for a while but lost it.

## CHAPTER XIV.

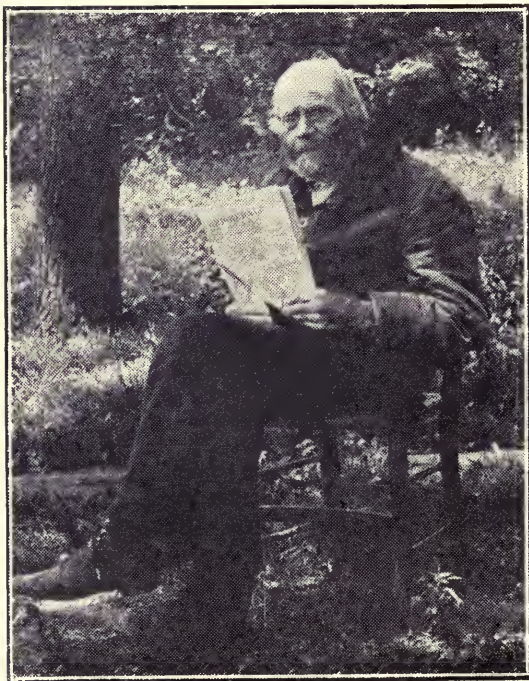
### Father and Mother

As I have no pictures of father or mother some would like to have me write a little description of them. I think that mother was a little above the average height of women but not very tall or fleshy. She perhaps resembled her half brother, uncle John Colville, as much as any one I think of. As she has been dead nearly 75 years I cannot remember her looks very distinctly. Mrs. H. G. Howlett used to tell me that I looked like my mother. Father was a little above the average size of men, 5 feet 11 inches tall, but never very fleshy. He got a little fleshy in his late years as he did not work much for a few years before he died in 1860. He used to read a great deal and he left the entire care of the farm and stock to his sons. Brother Robert was head manager here till he married in 1856; then he soon built a house on his own part of the farm and moved there and left me to take charge of father's farm and stock. My brother Alexander went to some high schools for a while and then taught school some before enlisting in the Illinois 4th Cavalry in 1861. Father said he never was weighed in his life; but I think he would weigh more than 200 lbs., especially in his late years. I think he was a strong man and he said he sometimes had such high bins full of potatoes that his hired men in Scotland would not shovel in the top so he did it himself. I have seen pictures of old General Scott that I thought looked very much like father.

## Appendix.

The following was copied from father's account book about the death of his uncle, James McNair, who was killed fighting for the Americans at the battle of Monmouth:

"Tears like the morning dew should fall on the memory of the heroes. At the battle of Monmouth, on the 25th of June last, fell Lieutenant McNair of the artillery, an officer who deserves the tears of his country. Born in North Britain, he came to America, and early embarked in the cause against the tyrant. He served as a private in the first campaign at Boston, and afterwards rose through the intermediate offices from a private to a lieutenant without the least solicitation to obtain that promotion and without the interest of one friend but what his merit gave him. His captain, in a letter from the camp at White Plains, writes as follows: 'I cannot help lamenting of the death of so valuable an officer. He was cool, attentive to his duty, intrepid and brave, undisturbed in the hottest engagements, and commanded with the firmness and courage of a Roman. He was loved and esteemed by his officers, and loved and feared by his soldiers. He had a warm sense of duty to God and lived regularly and religiously. He was humane and extremely charitable. He was humble in spirit, modest in manner, and steady in his conduct. He possessed the highest sense of liberty and wished to establish the independence of his country. He dies fighting bravely against slavery and tyranny. Not less than a cannon ball separated his noble soul from his body. It may be said of Britain what Solomon said of Sin: "Many has she cast down wounded; many strong men hath been slain by her."'"



DAVID SMITH.













UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 003833636